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SUPPLANTED.

BY WM. MACKINTOSH.

Two hearts as one at the altar stood,
Tho' speech nor pen could unite them more,
Nor dreamed the future all kindly would
E'er blight one bloom of their love in store.

Ah! they could not lift time's latch, nor view
What waits them there on the untried road,
But trust their love will bear them thro',
And make life's pressing an easy load.

But, ah! how soon will the dark clouds hide
The sun's bright beams in a golden day,
And, ah! too soon must this gentle bride
Feel the knot that bound them slip away.

Another's eye has cast its dart,
And it strikes his breast, and wounds him sore,
While the faithful one feels its poisoned smart,
As it dimmed love's priceless gem she wore.

The rose's blush bade her cheek adieu,
The bright star hope forsook her breast
Of snowy white—pure, guileless, true,
And dreamless sleep soon gave her rest.

He saw her dead, but her marble brow
Lies cold, by one kiss of love unfanned,
Nor sigh, nor sad-felt tear may show
He wished her peace in the better land.

His bosom a cold, unfertile rock,
Too bleak for sympathy's tender seeds,
Yields not to conscience's warning knock,
For a faithless heart bears naught but weeds.

Thorns and Blossoms

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A BLACK VEIL," "HER MOTHER'S CRIME," "A BROKEN WEDDING RING," "MABEL MAY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.—[CONTINUED.]

"RANDOLPH," cried Violet angrily, "do you know that you treat me very much like a child?"

"You are a child, woman, and queen, all in one," he said,

"Yet in none of those capacities can I pay a little visit when I wish," she replied.

"Ah, my darling," he cried, "do not add to my perplexities! Violet, I am in trouble."

The handsome face drooped over hers, and he laid his arms caressingly round her shoulders.

"I am in trouble, Violet."

Her fair face paled a little.

"Ah!" she said. "You have been spending too much money. I have been afraid of it."

He did not undeceive her.

Better that she should think it a money-trouble than know the reality just yet—above all, until he had decided what course to pursue.

She must not run the risk of meeting English people.

"Of course," she said gravely, "that alters everything. Oh, Randolph darling, I am so grieved! And I know—I am sure that you have run all this risk for my sake. It is for me you have gone to all this expense. But my dear, my dear, you need not, you must not. Believe me, I should be so happy with you in two little rooms as in this grand hotel—nay, happier; for, my darling Randolph, this does not suit you, you have not been half so happy lately. I have never heard you sing 'June's palace paved with gold' since we have been here. You have done all to please me, I know. How thoughtless and cruel I have been not to have foreseen this!"

Then he folded her more tightly in his arms, and kissed, with passionate, vehement love, the beautiful face.

It was worth it all—all the pain, the difficulty, the doubt—to be loved so entirely for himself.

Thank Heaven, he was loved for himself—not for his money, not for his rank, not for his title!

She wondered a little at the passionate kisses that he rained on her face.

"Why, Randolph," she said; "you are more of a lover than ever!"

"And you, my darling, more worthy of being loved," he replied.

"I will go back to Mrs. Carstone, and tell her that I cannot go with her," she said; and her face was more radiant than if she had just heard that a large fortune had been left to her.

"Then, Randolph, we will talk about ways and means. Let me work, dear, do—I should be so happy! This life does not suit me or please me; I want more to do. I will not be long. Now give me one smile before I go; and—and—if I have been tiresome, do forgive me, Randolph darling."

When he was alone, he wondered if she had given him the greatest love of which she was capable.

How radiant her face was when he kissed her!

Was it possible that in that pure noble soul there were depths he had not reached—"Love can be made perfect only through suffering."

There had been no shadow over her love; no suffering had come near her.

He had no thought of the future, of the intolerable anguish that was to be his. He began to wonder, if Violet had met Oscar Carstone first, whether she would have loved him.

He wished that she had had more opportunities, that she had seen other men, that she had seen more of the world.

She seemed to have many ideas in common with Oscar Carstone, far more than she had with him. Then he laughed aloud at himself.

"I am jealous," he said—"jealous of the simple, beautiful Violet who has bloomed for my eyes alone."

He smiled to think that she should imagine he was troubled over money-matters.

How simple and innocent she was!

Ah, Heaven, thank Heaven, he had won that pearl above all price—a woman who loved him for himself and himself alone!

* * * * * * *

For some days after that little interview matters went on more smoothly.

Violet's affection for her husband was quickened and roused by the thought that he was in trouble, and the trouble was caused by his having spent too much money on her.

Her generous, noble nature warmed to him.

She cared more for him during the next few days than she had ever done, and he was in the seventh heaven of delight.

One thing that puzzled him just a little, although he did not give much thought to it, was the strange attitude of the Carstone family towards him; there was a kind of subdued pity in their manner, and once more Richard Carstone began to urge him to accept commissions for pictures.

He never dreamed that Violet, in her absolute simplicity and ignorance of the world, had frankly told them that her husband was troubled about money.

To her there was nothing to be ashamed of in the fact.

No one that she had known ever had enough money.

It seemed to her the chronic state of half the world.

She had no idea, not even the faintest, that all the virtue and talent in the world would not cover that most fatal of all wants—want of money.

"We must be careful," said Richard Carstone, whose pockets were lined with gold. "After all, I am almost glad that the man has kept aloof from us. If we had been very intimate, he would have begun to borrow money; it is the first thing these improvident men do. I should not be surprised, Mary, my dear, if he is staying here because he cannot pay his hotel bill."

"I hope it is nothing quite so bad as that" said the kindly wife. "If it is, I must do something to help the girl, for I am really fond of her."

But a delicate little investigation, carried on by Oscar, proved just the contrary.

There seemed to be no lack of money. The landlord told him, in strict confidence, that the English artist was the best payer in the hotel, that his donations to the servants and waiters and his gifts to the poor showed that he had plenty of money to command.

"It may be mother," said Oscar, "that he has had plenty until now, and that he foresees a shortness. I have thought lately that he had something on his mind; he looks so thoughtful, or rather so uneasy. I am quite sure there is something wrong. Perhaps his pictures will not sell."

"In that case you would imagine that he would be only too pleased to accept your father's offer."

"I do not think so. He does not like any of us, and he is jealous of me."

Lord Ryvers was thoughtful.

More than once Oscar Carstone had found him walking on the terrace, his handsome brows knitted, his lips tightly drawn, a frown on the open brow, and the shadow of deep thought in his eyes.

"Money," said the heir of Ingleshaw to himself—"money! Nothing but want of money ever makes a man look like that." And, although he was by no means ill-natured, he was not altogether sorry that the man who would persist in treating him as an inferior was in some trouble. "I would lend him a few hundreds myself," he said, "without saying anything to my father, if he would humble himself even ever so little, but never while he carries himself like that."

Violet saw her husband pacing up and down the terrace; and the sight of his troubled face went to her heart.

She remembered how sanguine he had been, how he had lavished everything upon her, always telling her that he could afford it.

She went up to him, and placed her arm in his.

"Let us share the walk and the thoughts and the trouble. You look worried, Randolph. Is it about money?"

"Certainly money has to do with it," he replied vaguely.

"Cheer up, Randolph! While we have youth health, and strength, it seems to me a sad thing to be troubled about money. I would not be so troubled," she added with a bright laugh. "Why, Randolph, you need not be down-hearted! You know you carry your fortune in those clever fingers of yours."

And with a quick graceful motion, she bent down and kissed his hands.

"You are the sweetest comforter in the world, Violet," he said. His honest heart beat with delight, his honest face cleared and brightened.

"When I talk to you about money, Randolph," she remarked, "you always begin to praise me."

"Because I think you the least mercenary person in the world," he replied; "and, just as I detest mercenary, so I love unmercenary people."

"I hope I shall always have enough to eat and to drink, and a roof over my head, with just a few simple pleasures; beyond that I care but little," Violet declared.

He bent down and kissed the beautiful face; such a grand, noble, generous soul shone out of those violet eyes.

"It is for that I love you so, my darling!" he cried.

"Randolph," she said, after a short pause, "I wish you would be a little more worldly wise."

"Do you? But I thought you did not care about worldly people."

"I do not; but there is a proper kind of worldliness. Now listen patiently; promise me beforehand that you will not be cross."

"I will not," he replied.

Still she hesitated, with a curious kind of hesitation.

"I am half afraid," she said, with a little tremulous laugh; and that admission made him very tender towards her. "I do want you to be more worldly wise," she went on. "I can see how you might make a great deal of money."

"Tell me how," he said.

"By being more amiable to the Carstones. They are rich people—oh, Randolph, they are so rich, and they give such great sums of money for pictures; and they like us!"

"Well," he said, for she had paused abruptly, "what then, Violet?"

"They like us," she repeated; "and I am quite sure, Randolph, if you would be just a little more agreeable to Mr. Carstone, he would buy as many pictures as you could paint. That would not be losing your independence; he would have far more than the value of his money."

She wondered at the amused smile that played round his lips.

"You are not angry, Randolph?" she said.

"Not in the least," he replied.

"And you promise to think about it?"

"I promise," said Lord Ryvers.

"Will you go further still, and promise to make effort to be more sociable with the Carstones?" she said.

"I will promise even that," he then replied.

"Now I will test you," she said. "Mrs. Carstone has been to see me this morning, and we have both of us—both, mind, Randolph—a great favor to ask from you."

"To be really gallant, I ought to say that it is granted; but it will be wiser to know what it is before doing so."

"Every year, on the feast of St. Philipo, there is a ball given by—well, I do not know what they are called here, but in England we call them the mayor and corporation. The ball is given for the visitors. They go to immense trouble and expense over it, and the visitors make a point of going. Mrs. Carstone wants to take me."

"And you?" he said gently.

"Oh, Randolph, I long to go! I have never been to a ball; I should enjoy it so much."

He knew that to give his consent to her going to this ball was the most imprudent thing he could do; but he did not know how to refuse her; she had just been so kind and loving to him.

"My dearest Violet," he said, "I would rather that you gave up the idea of going, unless you wish it greatly—I would much prefer your not going."

"Oh, Randolph, do not refuse me, dear! I have never even seen a ball; and they say this will be magnificent—such flowers, such lights! And I long to dance, just as a caged bird longs to fly."

"Would it be such a great pleasure to you my darling?" he asked.

The beautiful face raised to his was very wistful.

"It would be the greatest possible pleasure," she answered.

"But Violet darling, you cannot dance."

"I can learn," she cried eagerly. "It comes quite naturally to me to move to the measure of music."

"That I believe," he said.

"Mr. Oscar Carstone says he will teach me the steps, and to waltz."

"Mr. Oscar Carstone will do nothing of the kind!" her husband cried, his face flushing. "I will teach you myself."

"Can you dance, Randolph?" she asked, looking up at him in laughing wonder.

He was about to answer that he had been considered one of the best waltzers in London, when he stopped abruptly.

"I should not have thought you had had sufficient leisure in your life to think of dancing. It seems so strange. When will you teach me, Randolph?"

"If you go, I will take you, and, if you wish to dance, I will teach you," he replied.

She kissed him in a transport of delight; and he was touched at finding how she longed for a little pleasure.

"You shall go, Violet," he said decisively. "I cannot refuse you. But you have no idea of the trouble of preparing for a ball."

"Trouble!" she repeated. "Why, Randolph, I should call it unbounded pleasure."

"You must have a ball-dress," he said, looking at the beautiful figure, with its graceful lines and curves.

Violet looked up at him slyly.

"I know you will not be willing, Randolph," she began, with some hesitation; "but Mrs. Carstone is going, and she will wear white moire. She—that is—I—you will not, I know—that she seemed so very anxious to—that I should have one like it."

"You mean," he said, "that she has dared to offer to give you a ball-dress?"

"Yes; but she did it so kindly; and do you know, Randolph, she seemed half frightened, as though she hardly liked doing it."

"I am sure she meant kindly," he replied. "I hope you have all the dresses and everything else you need, Violet. Surely Mrs. Carstone has not imagined that you require a dress?"

"I have too many dresses, rather than too few," she said.

"I will buy you a ball-dress, and you will like it all the better because it is my choosing."

"You will not spend much money over it, Randolph? Remember, it will be a grief to me—not a pleasure—if you do that."

"I will not give one cent more than I can afford," he said. "I feel that I have committed an imprudence in agreeing to let you go; but how could I refuse you?"

"I love such imprudence," she declared. "Aunt Alice said our marriage was a cruel imprudence; but it has not been the less happy. The ball will be an imprudence, yet I dare say we shall both enjoy it."

But, if she could have foreseen all that would spring from the ball at the Hotel de Ville, she would not have gone to it.

"I knew," said Oscar to Mrs. Carstone, "that he would not let me give her a dancing lesson. How delighted she was when I suggested it: and how I should have enjoyed it! I will take care of one thing—no matter what he says or does, I shall dance with her!"

Mrs. Carstone felt slightly uncomfortable.

"You must remember, Oscar," she said, "that a good wife is always obedient to her husband."

"That is all right," he returned impatiently. "I do not want to interfere between husband and wife; but he might be a little more amiable. Why not let her practice dancing with me? It could not hurt him."

"No; but perhaps it is as well to be careful, Oscar. You are not the worst-looking man in the world, and she is but a young girl."

He was just a little flattered; but his dislike for Lord Ryvers increased from that hour.

More than once he said to himself—

"Only let me have the chance, and I will pay him for every slight and every insult he has given me."

The chance and the time for such payment were both nearer than he thought, for strange events were about to happen, and the cloud that had been no bigger than a man's hand had grown and hung dark overhead.

CHAPTER XV.

VIOLET RANDOLPH was standing in her pretty sleeping-room, where the green vine-leaves shaded the window, a picture of pleased wonder and surprise.

A handsome ball-dress lay spread out before her.

She said to herself that it was a realized dream of what a ball-dress should be—a rich white silk, draped with the most exquisite lace, and trimmed with lilies of the valley; and with it lay everything needful for a ball-room toilette, even down to the white silk shoes, that might have been intended for Cinderella.

There was a superb fan, with lilies of the valley most exquisitely worked on the white satin, a soft warm *sortie du bal* of rich satin, embroidered with lilies, a magnificent bouquet of white lilies shrouded in their dark green leaves, and a spray of pearls, shaped like lilies, for the hair.

Violet as she looked at her treasures, thought more of their beauty than their cost.

It was not in girl-nature to keep the sight of these beautiful things to herself.

She went to Mrs. Carstone, and found that lady in a state of subdued ecstasy, because her milliner had made a train of rich ruby velvet for her dress of white brocade.

"Will you come and look at my ball-dress?" Violet said, after she had duly admired her friend's. "I should like to know if it is suitable. I have had no experience."

As the stately lady sailed along the corridors, she resolved to be very kind and condescending.

She must praise the dress, no matter what it looked like—that was imperative.

No doubt it was some cheap pretty costume Mr. Randolph had bought.

But all her condescension vanished in a mist of wonder when she saw Violet's magnificent toilette.

"It is exquisite," she cried, with uprained hands—"perfectly exquisite! You must let Barton my maid, dress you." Then she examined the lace. "Why, this is real!" she cried. "It is real lace, Mrs. Randolph!"

"Is it?" asked Violet serenely, without the least idea of the value of real lace.

Then Mrs. Carstone looked fixedly at the beautiful queenly girl before her.

"My dear," she inquired, in a strange tone of voice, "what is your husband?"

"My husband!" echoed Violet, in a tone of wonder at the question. "He is an artist: you know, Mrs. Carstone."

"He must be a very successful artist to give you a toilette of this description."

"He is successful," said Violet proudly. "How can he be otherwise with his talent."

"He must make a great deal of money to purchase such things as these; and I—pray do not think me rude, my dear—I understood you to say that he had some little trouble about money. Do you know the cost of this really magnificent present?"

"No," laughed Violet; "I have never bought such things."

"Including the lace, which is real, and the pearls, which are very fine ones, your husband could not have paid less than two hundred pounds for it," said Mrs. Carstone. "I have a lace flounce, not so fine as this which cost me eighty guineas."

"Two hundred pounds!" cried Violet, aghast. "It surely cannot be!"

"I should think it was more, if anything," replied Mrs. Carstone.

"Do excuse me for one minute," Violet exclaimed hastily. "I will not have it. Randolph must send it back again."

Then she flew rather than walked, to her husband's studio.

"Randolph," she cried, "Mrs. Carstone says the things you have purchased for me have cost two hundred pounds! Is it true?"

"No," he replied; "they were within that sum."

"I am so glad," she said, her face brightening. "They are so beautiful, and I should like to keep them; but I would not if they cost that sum."

"Violet never mind Mrs. Carstone; trust me. We artists have opportunities of purchase known only to ourselves. Wear your pretty dress, my dear, and rest assured I have not in the least exceeded my means."

She was comforted and hastened back to Mrs. Carstone.

"It is all right," she said to that astonished lady; "Mr. Randolph says I need not be in the least uneasy about it.

"Of course, my dear, he knows his business best," said Mrs. Carstone. "The dress is fit for a duchess, and you will look magnificent in it; but you must never talk about your husband having a money-trouble again—never."

"I will not," replied Violet simply.

No more was said; but Mrs. Carstone did not feel quite satisfied.

There was some mystery, she felt sure; and she could not rest until she had told her husband.

"I cannot say that I am surprised Mary," he remarked, after listening attentively to his wife's disclosures. "I have always thought there was something mysterious about Mr. Randolph. She is open and frank enough; but I have never understood him."

"What can be wrong with them?" asked Mrs. Carstone.

"I should not like to offer an opinion, my dear" replied her husband—"in fact I could not guess; but I am quite sure there is something amiss, even if we never find it out. I should not trouble about it, Mary; they are respectable, and he is an artist—a clever one, no doubt. I quite agree with Oscar—if you can get Mrs. Randolph to visit you in London, your position will be made."

"I felt, when I saw her, that she was to bring good luck to me," said Mrs. Carstone; "but I should like to know what this mystery is."

"You may depend upon one thing," remarked Mr. Carstone—"Mrs. Randolph will be the belle of the ball; and, when she has been seen, we shall have all the grandees in the neighborhood inviting her. If you will play your cards well we shall be invited too, Mary."

"It seems a strange thing that a beautiful face can gain admittance where money cannot," said Mrs. Carstone.

"The world is full of strange things, my dear," rejoined the retired corn-factor. "I think myself that a beautiful woman is far more to be admired even than a moneyed man."

And then Mrs. Carstone forgot her doubts fears, suspicions, and everything else, in her great anxiety about the ball.

No one dreamed that that night would bring about a crisis in many lives.

The Hotel de Ville was brilliantly illuminated.

It was a grand building, with fine old carvings and arched windows—a noble specimen of architecture; there was an excellent band, and the flowers were magnificent—indeed the scene altogether was one of brilliancy and animation.

The guests were numerous and select.

By far the most beautiful woman present was Violet Randolph.

As she stood under the great chandelier, the light falling full on her golden hair, with its spray of pearls, on the beautiful face, with its dainty flush, on the exquisite figure, with its graceful floating draperies, she made as fair a picture as could well be imagined.

Of course she was the queen and the belle: admiring eyes followed her; a little crowd of worshipers gathered round her.

She was overwhelmed with entreaties for a dance; but, as she knew nothing except the waltz, she was compelled to refuse many invitations.

"Violet," whispered her husband, "etiquette or not, I shall have the first dance with you. It is your first ball, your first waltz, and it must be with me."

She complied laughingly.

Oscar, on seeing this, and hearing such warm praise of the beautiful pair, was disgusted.

He was relieved in some measure by opening his mind to his mother.

"This shows," he said, "that I have been right in my estimation of the man; he is no gentleman. Would a gentleman monopolize his own wife?"

"Certainly not," replied Mrs. Carstone. "But, Oscar, I hear that there are some distinguished English people here. Is it true?"

"I heard something of the same kind; but I was too vexed to listen," he then replied.

"Never mind Mrs. Randolph now," said his mother; "discover who these people are. Mind, Oscar—if they are worth knowing, be sure and get some introductions."

He returned after a few minutes, looking somewhat excited and interested.

"A good old English family," he said, in a low voice—"the Forest-Hays. Lady Forest-Hay will be pleased to know you; they are staying at the 'Lion d'Or.' I wish we had gone there, instead of to the English hotel."

"What and who are the Forest-Hays? I have never heard of them," said Mrs. Carstone.

"Every one knows them," replied Oscar in a tone of surprise. "Lord Forest-Hay is one of the great Tory leaders. It seems that St. Philipo is their favorite place of resort in the autumn. I like the son—Hubert; I have been talking to him."

"Can you introduce the Randolphs?" asked Mrs. Carstone anxiously.

"I should not just at first," was the cautious reply. "Mrs. Randolph, of course, one would be proud to present; but her husband is so queer, he would do us no credit."

Presently an introduction took place between Lady Forest-Hay and Mrs. Carstone.

Hubert, the son and heir, who had already made a name for himself in Parliament, seemed interested, and talked for some time about the ball.

"My mother likes St. Philipo," he said; "She spends a month or two here every year. My father does not care about it; he and I generally go further south. There are some pretty girls here; but who is that golden-haired girl in white silk?"

"That is Mrs. Randolph," replied Oscar, "an English lady staying at the English hotel."

"I do not think I have ever seen a more beautiful woman," declared the young man.

And then Oscar Carstone felt anxious to have the honor of introducing this perfectly beautiful woman to his new acquaintance.

"The Randolphs are great friends of ours," he said eagerly; "we are staying at the same hotel. I shall be very pleased to introduce you, if you like."

"And I shall be delighted to have the opportunity of making the acquaintance of such a peerless woman," said his companion. "I am fortunate; I shall find quite a pleasant circle here. If my expectations are realized, I shall remain for some time in St. Philipo. I saw an old college chum of mine as we passed through the rooms; he did not see me, and I had not time to stop and speak to him."

"An Englishman?" asked Oscar very anxiously.

"Yes—and a very famous Englishman too—Lord Ryvers of Ryveswell."

"Is he here, do you say?" asked Oscar inquiringly.

"I saw him in one of the reception-rooms" replied Hubert Forest-Hay.

"It is strange that I have not heard the name," said Oscar. "I thought I knew all the English people in St. Philipo. Where is he staying?"

"I do not know. He was staying with me at Oxford. I know him well and like much."

"I should like to see him," said Oscar.

His companion then glanced round the room.

"He is not here; but I am sure to see him again. I will introduce you if you wish. Ryveswell is, to my thinking, one of the finest places in England. That Mrs. Randolph is a beautiful woman. What is the husband like?"

"He is not to be compared with her, not for a moment; he is an artist and a snob."

"Yet the husband of such a grand creature as that?"

"Yes. I cannot tolerate him; but I admire his wife. None of us like him."

"Is he here?" asked Hubert Forest-Hay.

"Yes; he brought her. He would not let her come with us. My mother, who is good-nature itself, wanted to chaperon her. He positively danced the first waltz with her."

The young politician laughed.

"Ah," he said suddenly, and his face brightened, "there is my old friend Lord Ryvers!"

"Where?" asked Oscar.

"That tall handsome man leaning against the white statue."

Oscar Carstone looked at him with a strange expression, almost of terror, on his face.

"Do you mean the man with the flower in his coat?"

"Yes," replied his companion—"that is Lord Ryvers."

"That Lord Ryvers? Why, he calls himself Mr. Randolph! He is the husband of that golden-haired girl, and he lives at the English hotel with us!"

And for some moments the two stood looking at each other in silent wonder.

CHAPTER XVI.

"YOU must surely be mistaken!" cried Hubert Forest-Hay. "You must be dreaming. I assure you that that gentleman is Randolph, Lord Ryvers of Ryveswell, of Mount Avon in Hampshire, of Avon Villa in the Isle of Wight, of Glenfair in Scotland, and Avon House, Mayfair. You see, I know his titles and possessions by heart. His father has been dead many years, and he has succeeded to a vast fortune, the savings of a long minority. His mother, Lady Ryvers, is—well, I should certainly say, one of the proudest women in England. He has two sisters; one lives with Lady Ryvers, the other is a great leader of fashion—the Countess of Lester. You see that I cannot be mistaken in his identity."

Still Oscar Carstone looked at him with vague wondering eyes.

"And I know him as 'Mr. Randolph,' a clever but by no means well-known artist. He has been staying with Mrs. Randolph at the English hotel for some weeks. There must be some mistake. His wife told my mother some few days since that he was in some trouble concerning money."

Here Hubert Forest-Hay laughed out aloud.

"Money-troubles! Why, Lord Ryvers is one of the richest men in England! If he has any trouble with regard to money, it is that he has so much, he does not know what to do with it."

"Are you quite sure that is Lord Ryvers?" asked Oscar.

"I am sure of his identity as I am of my own," replied Hubert Forest-Hay.

"Who is the lady?" Oscar Carstone asked suddenly. "If you know Lord Ryvers so well, you must know his wife."

But Hubert Forest-Hay shook his head gravely.

"I assure you I have never seen her before; and now that I reflect, I never heard that Lord Ryvers was married. I remember hearing that he was struck with the last new beauty, Gwendoline Marr, Lord Marr's daughter."

"Was this lady Miss Marr?" asked Oscar.

"No. Gwendoline Marr is one of the most beautiful women in London, but a brunette—a perfect brunette. I met Lady Ryvers last week—I was with her for half an hour—and she said nothing about her son being married—not one word; and I think, knowing that he was an old chum of mine, she would have told me."

Again the two men looked blankly at each other.

"I am sorry I came," said Hubert Forest-Hay slowly; "I am sorry I have seen him. There is no mistake about it. The man I know to be Lord Ryvers you know as Mr. Randolph."

"There is no particular harm in any gentleman laying aside his title if he chooses," said Oscar.

"No, there is no harm in that," was the answer—"none whatever."

Both young men were silent: their eyes were fixed on the beautiful face shining under the light of the great chandelier.

"Is it a private marriage, should you think?" Oscar said, in a low voice.

"Only Heaven knows," replied his companion; "I cannot say. It is no business of mine. I wish I had not come."

Oscar Carstone bent down and whispered a few words in his ear.

Hubert Forest-Hay looked up with a horrified face.

"I am almost afraid you are right," he said. "Yet Randolph Ryvers was one of the most honorable and loyal of men. He can never have fallen so low."

Again Oscar Carstone whispered to his companion, who returned—

"I am afraid it is so; it looks like it. You say that he avoids all English people?"

"That he certainly does," was the answer. "But, if it be as we surmise I am sure that girl has been foully, cruelly deceived!"

His face flushed and his eyes flashed fire.

"Do you know," he added fiercely, "it seems a strange thing to say, but, if it be true, and she is true, I would make her my wife to-morrow! You do not understand that?"

"I do not understand what I consider perfect madness," said Hubert Forest-Hay coldly.

"If I thought it true—my suspicions true," cried Oscar—"I would shoot him just as I would shoot a dog!"

"My good friend, if you were to shoot every man who does a wrong of that kind, you would leave the world half empty."

"But look at her! She is lovely and proud, imperial and gracious. Would any one dare to wrong a woman like that?"

"It is quite possible that there may have been no wrong," said Hubert Forest-Hay. "We have no right to judge by appearances although I confess that in this case the appearances are black enough. Had you no suspicion that he was masquerading? It

seems to me that any one could tell Lord Ryvers mixed in the highest circles."

Oscar looked slightly crestfallen.

He did not wish his newly-made friend to think that he was deficient, or could not recognize a gentleman by birth when he saw one.

"To tell you the truth," he said, "I have been very much puzzled. I never thought he was what he represented himself to be; but I must also own that I never guessed him to be what he is. Why, he has worked as hard as any professional man! He has a studio in the hotel, which he has had fitted up at his own expense."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The Young Nurse.

BY PERCY HERBERT.

MRS. COLONEL DESPARD advertised for a housekeeper, and Esther Glisson answered the advertisement.

Mrs. Colonel Despard was a beautiful brunette, with cheeks like roses, eyes bright as the Despard diamonds, and more money than she knew what to do with.

Esther Glisson was tall and slender, with grey eyes, no particular style of features, and a dress so turned and dyed and mended that she involuntarily shrank every time anyone looked at her, feeling that their scrutiny must inevitably detect the few pretexts of poverty.

Mrs. Despard sat in her rose-silk-hung boudoir, when Miss Glisson was shown into her presence.

"Why, Esther!" cried Mrs. Despard, jumping up and tumbling all her case of letter-paper over the floor.

And Esther colored scarlet.

"I—I didn't think it was your house I was coming to, Dora Estcourt," faltered she.

"But I'm so glad to see you," said Mrs. Despard. "You've come to visit me?"

"No," said Esther Glisson. "I've come to answer the advertisement for a housekeeper."

"You!" hesitated the rich man's wife.

"Yes," said Esther, plucking up her moral courage with an effort. "I am very poor.

"My uncle is dead, and I am forced to depend for a living upon my own exertions.

"I think I could make a good housekeeper.

"I will try my best; and"—with a second effort—"you need have no fear, Mrs. Despard, that our former school-girl intimacy will tend to make me familiar or presuming."

"That's all nonsense, Etty," said the warm-hearted little brunette.

"No," said Esther, quietly. "Things are changed since we were at Madame Fullerseau's.

"If I take wages from you, I must remember that I am in a servitor's place."

So Mrs. Despard engaged Miss Glisson to superintend her household, and on evenings when there was no company, she would have Esther in her own little boudoir with her.

Old Mrs. Warrington, who lived next door, shook her head at this, and spoke a few words of warning in Mrs. Despard's ear.

"My dear," said she, "you are young and inexperienced.

"Perhaps you don't know that young housekeeper will presume, if this sort of thing goes on."

"Oh, no, she won't," said Mrs. Despard, carelessly.

"Pardon me, my dear," said Mrs. Warrington, "but your knowledge of the world is less than mine. It won't do. Take warning in time."

But Mrs. Colonel Despard persisted in going her own way.

"I know Esther," said she. "She is not one to pay kindness with presumption. Esther Glisson is as true a lady as myself by birth and breeding."

So Mrs. Despard went to N—— for the summer, and left Esther in charge of the great vacant mansion in full security that all would be right.

For Colonel Despard had gone off on a yachting expedition, and the children, two cherry cheeked little girls, were at a farm-house in C——, with their French bonne and an attendant nurse.

Nothing disturbed the serenity of Mrs. Despard's mind until she received a letter from old Mrs. Warrington.

"I do not know, my dear," wrote that omniscient old woman, "whether I am justified in meddling in affairs that are not my own, but putting myself mentally in your place, I have concluded that I ought to write you that your husband returned home two weeks ago, and that he is now there, alone with Miss Glisson, a young paragon of a housekeeper, every servant having been discharged, with the solitary exception of Jean, the colonel's valet. What this means I cannot undertake to say, but perhaps you will believe me the next time when I advise you as to the folly of making too much of your dependants.

"Yours very affectionately,

"WINIFRED WARRINGTON."

Poor Mrs. Despard dropped the letter as if it had been a stinging scorpion.

Esther alone with her husband!

Esther deceiving her!

She would not believe it.

And then the grim array of facts confronted her face to face, and she broke out into an hysterical sort of sob.

Of all people in the world, she believed first in her husband, next in Esther Glisson.

And now both these idols were thrown ruthlessly to the ground.

As she sat in the hotel, the letter lying at her feet, a carriage rattled up to the door.

Within sat old Mr. Allworthy, who lived directly opposite them.

She started up.

"Oh, Mr. Allworthy, I am so glad to see you! My husband—is—is it true that he is at home?"

Mr. Allworthy fumbled at the strap of his valise, without meeting her eye.

"I believe he is, madam," he answered.

Mrs. Despard's heart sank within her.

"He is well?" she added, faintly.

And Mr. Allworthy, still busy with the valise, responded—

"I—I can't be quite sure, madam—I have not seen him lately."

Not seen him!

And the windows of the Allworthy House looking directly into theirs?

Something was wrong.

Dora knew that something must be wrong.

"I'll go home myself," she thought, a dry huskiness coming into her throat. "No one has the courage, it seems, to tell me the truth, except old Mrs. Warrington, who delights in imparting disagreeable tidings, of all natures."

So she bade Annette, the maid, pack her trunks and boxes.

"I shall take the morning express back to town," said she.

"Back home!" cried the astonished French woman, "and madam's new dress but just come for the bal masque of to-morrow.

"Did I say anything about bals masques?" imperiously demanded Mrs. Despard.

And Annette was effectually silenced.

They reached home in the purple dusk of twilight, and the ride seemed almost interminable to Mrs. Despard, ere they stopped at her own door.

The officious Annette would have gone first, but Mrs. Despard pushed her aside, and hurried up the steps with faltering speed.

Esther Glisson herself opened the door, but her cheek paled at the sight of Mrs. Despard.

'Oh, go away, go away," she ejaculated, closing the door in Mrs. Despard's face; "this is no place for you."

Pale and agonized the poor wife stood there, her worst fears confirmed, and feeling like an alien and an outcast on her own doorstep, until old Mrs. Warrington, catching sight of her, hastened down to her.

"Come in here, my dear," said she, drawing Dora into the open door of her own house, "and I'll tell you all about it."

"All about what? I don't understand," faltered poor Dora. "I feel as if I was in a dream."

"I'm sorry I wrote that letter," said Mrs. Warrington. "I fear it inspired you with a wrong impression.

"Esther Glisson is not at all to blame. In fact, she has behaved like a heroine all through it."

"All through what?" gasped Mrs. Despard. "Do tell me, or I shall go frantic."

"All through Colonel Despard's illness," said Mrs. Warrington. "Your husband, my poor child, has been at death's door with the typhus fever, and Miss Glisson has nursed him through it, aided only by Jean.

"And that was the reason the servants all went away—and oh, my love, he wouldn't let them terrify you by writing, because she was so sure he would do well, and because she was so tender of your youth and inexperience.

"She has risked her own life for you—because, she said, you had been so kind to her—and he is better, much better now. Only you mustn't go near him at present."

"God bless her," gasped Mrs. Despard. "My noble, heroic Esther! And I—I allowed myself to be jealous of her."

Colonel Despard recovered.

And, contrary to the expectations of every one, Miss Glisson escaped the disease to which she had exposed herself so bravely.

She is now Mrs. Despard's dearest friend, and the little brunette promises her, with many asseverations, that she "never, never, will be jealous again."

The Artist.

BY HENRY FRITH.

WELL, I think I can survive a few days' stay in this humdrum country home of yours, Will," and Eric Gifford stretched himself at full length upon the grass, in the cool shade of the trees.

"Ha! what have we here?" said Eric, noticing a profusion of drawing materials, sketch-book, and several loose pieces scattered on the grass near him.

"Oh, that's some of Lu's handiwork," laughed Will Lancing.

"And who is Lu?"

"Have you forgotten that I have a little sister? Don't you remember seeing her when we made that flying trip from school?"

"I'm not one to remember anything—too much trouble, you know; but somehow it runs in my head, now, that I did see a little girl here at that time."

"The little girl has grown to be a tall young lady of seventeen.

"You'd scarcely know her. She'll be here presently—she must have gone somewhere for a walk."

"Whatever part of the globe one turns to one's sure to find a young lady. Confound it all! a fellow can find peace nowhere," thought Eric, as he slowly turned the leaves of the sketch-book.

Alone under the trees Eric sat, pencil and sketch-book in hand.

For nearly an hour he had been working hard without knowing it.

"Why, you have touched up my picture so that I scarcely know it myself," exclaimed a fresh young voice from behind him.

Eric Gifford raised his eyes and encountered a pretty, piquant face, framed in wavy brown hair, and a pair of clear gray eyes.

To evince any surprise would have been an exertion Mr. Gifford was wholly incapable of, so he gazed at the young girl after his lazy fashion.

Her lips parted in a smile, showing two rows of pearly teeth.

"I suppose you do not recollect me," she said; "I am Will's sister," and she extended her hand with the utmost frankness.

"I had forgotten you quite, until Will brushed up my memory," he said, taking the extended hand in his.

She sat down beside him, as if they had been life-long friends.

No one could accuse Lu Lancing of boldness or presumption, yet she had a way of placing herself on the most familiar terms in the shortest time possible.

"Oh, this is beautiful," she cried, enthusiastically, as she examined the picture. "The trees, the cattle, the water all are so true.

"I cannot see how you made them so perfect in so limited a space. But you are a painter.

"Will never told me, but that piece of work tells the story. I should dearly love to visit your studio in town, for I could spend a lifetime, I think, examining pictures."

"Miss Lancing, you are laboring under a mistake. I have no studio. Until to-day I haven't had a pencil or brush in my hand since Will and I were in school together. I used to amuse myself with that sort of work in those days to pass the time away."

"Mr. Gifford, you surprise me. You are a born artist. Why do you not cultivate your talent?"

"It would take too much time and trouble," and Eric stretched himself once more upon the grass, and looked the picture of laziness.

"Ah, then you have some other profession or perhaps your business cares are too numerous?" said Lu, interrogatively.

"Never had a profession, don't know the meaning of business cares. I don't care about creating a noise in this world. While I'm in it, I'll take all the pleasure I can get without exerting myself, and when my turn comes, I want to slip away as quietly as possible."

"Poor fellow!" said Lu, as she fixed her clear, gray eyes, with their look of intense pity, on the face of the handsome young man lying at her feet. "Oh Mr. Gifford, how can you lead such a life?"

"Well, by Jove! this is want I call cool, Eric Gifford, you over-feasted, petted youth you have come down here to find your level."

This is what Eric thought, but he smiled as he watched the expression of intense pity, and he answered:

"How can I lead such a life? Easy enough, you dear little innocent of seventeen. When one is born with a silver spoon in his mouth, or rather when one's father has done enough work to make a fortune, we find it very easy to slide along in this world without soiling one's hands."

"But, Mr. Gifford—

"'The bank may break, the factory burn,
A breath may burst your bubble shares,
And soft, white hands could hardly earn——'"

"Stop, I beg of you," exclaimed Eric, with a look of horror. "If such a train of disasters should occur, I would commit suicide, or do something——"

"Yes, do something that sounds better, and you'd find it would pay you better than suicide," said Lu.

There was a silence of a few moment's duration.

Eric fixed his eyes on the strange girl before him.

Disgust and pity were mingled together in the expression of her face now.

That look aroused a strange feeling within Eric Gifford's bosom.

He rose hastily from the grass.

"It is growing late," he said; "shall we walk to the house together?"

"I have no objection," she answered.

Without a word he took her hand, drew it within his arm, and they walked home in silence.

Were Lu Lancing's words prophetic?

The very next morning Eric received a telegram to come home at once.

His father was a ruined man.

"A breath had burst his bubble-shares," and Eric Gifford was on the verge of beggary.

"Poor fellow!" came once more from Lu's lips when she heard the news; "but it may be the making of him."

When taking leave of Lu, Eric held her hand for a long time in his.

He looked down at her sorrowful face.

How he loved her.

But with the uncertain life that lay before him he dared not tell her so.

"Your words of yesterday came back to me to-day, but I have no fear for you," she said, with a smile; "it is hardly likely that you will commit suicide."

"Hardly likely, Miss Lu," he answered, bitterly.

Pity was the expression on Lu's face, as she watched him depart, and pity is akin to love.

Did Lu love Eric?

Who can tell?

Hearts are not to be measured by the common mete.

* * * * * * *

"Who painted this much-talked of picture Will?" asked Lu Lancing, as she walked with her brother through the Temple of Art, waiting impatiently for the crowd of connoisseurs to take their departure from before the painting which had created such a furore.

"There, the way is clear for you now," said Will, leading her over to the picture without answering her question.

Lu caught her breath as her eyes fell upon the picture.

She started back, scarcely believing her senses.

Will smiled, as he watched the color coming and going in his sister's face.

"Pointing the Way," was the name of picture, and well Lu knew, without asking Will for information, the hand that painted that handsome man lying upon the grass, the very personification of laziness, and the girl, looking down at him, with an intensified expression of countenance, and her soul shining from the depths of her clear gray eyes.

Lu looked up at her brother at last, a rosy light beaming on her face.

"What do you think that girl is saying, Will?"

"How can he tell—he wasn't there," said a voice behind her. "She might be saying:

"'The bank may break, the factory burn,
A breath may burst your bubble-shares.'"

"Oh, Mr. Gifford," exclaimed Lu, for it was Eric.

He held the girl's hand, who had pointed his way, between both his palms, and looked down into her smiling eyes.

When an opportunity offered, he might tell her what he had longed to tell her that day he parted from her so long ago.

And Lu, did she love him?

Of course she did, for now she is Mrs. Gifford.

Bric-a-Brac.

CURIOSITIES OF DECAPITATION.—Dr. Holingren, of Paris, made some notes on the decapitation of two criminals. Three seconds after the stroke received by the first, the eyes were widely open and the pupils contracted. In twenty seconds the pupils began to dilate, and the process continued for two minutes. Twenty-five seconds after the decapitation the eyes turned upward and to the right. In forty-four seconds there were twitchings of the muscles of the neck, followed by the violent contractions. The mouth was drawn downward, and, with the tongue, deviated to the left. Some seconds later the mouth closed slowly. "Rhythmic movements" of the facial muscles followed, and complete repose ensued only in one minute and forty-five seconds after the execution. No movements were observed in the body. The second case presented similar appearances, but the criminal kept his eyes wide open while his head was on the block, and did not wink when the blow was struck. Notwithstanding the movements described, the doctor concludes that sensation is instantly arrested.

CAPTAIN KIDD.—Of Captain Kidd, with whom Lord Byron sailed to Lisbon, in 1809 he used to mention a strange story:—"This officer stated, that being asleep one night in his berth, he was awakened by the pressure of something heavy on his limbs, and, there being a faint light in the room, could see, as he thought, distinctly the figure of his brother who was at that time in the naval service in the East Indies, dressed in his uniform, and stretched across the bed. Concluding it be an illusion of the senses, he shut his eyes, and made an effort to sleep; but still the same pressure continued, and still, as often as he ventured to take another look, he saw the figure lying across him in the same position. To add to the wonder, on putting his hand forth to touch this form, he found the uniform, in which it appeared to be dressed, dripping wet. On the entrance of one of his brother officers, to whom he called out, in alarm, the apparition vanished; but in a few months after, he received the startling intelligence that on that night his brother had been drowned in the Indian seas. Of the supernatural character of this appearance Captain Kidd himself did not appear to have the slightest doubt."

GENESIS OF A NEW WORLD.—"On a beautiful summer's night, August 22, 1796, Jerome and Lefrancois de Lalande noticed a star in Aquarius, which they estimated of the 7½ magnitude. Six years later they thought it of the 8 magnitude. In appearance it resembles a star which is not exactly in the focus of the telescope. Herschel had observed it in September, 1872 and recorded it as an admirable planetary nebula, very brilliant, small and elliptical. Lord Rosse and Lassell perceived that it was surrounded by a ring, which gives it somewhat the appearance of Saturn. The spectroscopic observations of Huggins indicate that it is a gaseous mass, in which nitrogen and hydrogen predominate. Most of the other planetary and annular nebulæ give similar results. In 1871 and 1872 Brunnow the Irish Astronomer-Royal, measured its parallax and concluded that its distance is more than 404,000 times as great as that of the sun, and its diameter is probably greater than that of the entire solar system. This would make its volume more than 338,896,800,000,000,000 times as great as that of the earth. We have thus before our eyes a new system, which is probably undergoing the process of condensation through which our sun and its attendant planets passed hundreds of millions of years ago.

RECONSTRUCTION.

BY J.M.

In a wagon made of willow
Wheeled I once a little maiden,
Ringlets shining on the pillow,
Rolling homeward, treasure-laden,
Like a boat upon the billow.

Ten years fled. Ah, how I missed her
When we left the village-school!
But she said she'd be my sister
As we lingered by the pool,
And I passionately kissed her.

Ten more fleeting years renew it,
Little wagon made of willow;
Loving eyes are best to view it;
Loving hands adjust the pillow,
And we've fitted rockers to it.

TWICE MARRIED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE NEMESIS OF LOVE," "BARBARA GRAHAM," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XLI.—[CONTINUED.]

THE church was crowded when the two brides and their train were conducted to their places before the altar.

The murmur of admiration they excited could hardly be restrained by decorum and respect for the sacred edifice.

Laura de St. Hilaire had conquered the weakness that had nearly overcome her on leaving her home, and bore herself with the grand, queen-like air that was natural to her.

She looked proudly composed, to all outward observation, but her eyes were restless and unquiet in their bright, hurried glances, and her hand trembled visibly when Evan took it in his own to place on it the bridal ring.

Was it that trembling, or his own unsteady grasp, which caused the ring to slip from their fingers, and drop on the matting at the foot of the altar, from which it was picked up by Sir William Lloyd, and once more delivered to the clergyman, to be again hallowed, as it were, by his blessing, and placed in real truth on that taper finger?

It was an evil omen.

Glances were exchanged between the bridesmaids, and many of the spectators shook their heads, and whispered that there was something unnatural in the agitation of so young and brilliant a couple, that boded no good.

Far different was the demeanor of the other bridal pair.

Lucy, indeed, looked timid and half-fearful, with her downcast glances and fluttering breath, as she was led to the altar by her father.

As the solemn service proceeded, her lovely face became calm, and sweetly grave and solemn, and her vows were spoken audibly, and with fearless and heartfelt earnestness.

There was no distrust, no misgiving in her young heart.

Paul's noble, true face, and deep, earnest tones seemed pledges, even to the spectators of the ceremony, that he was worthy of the fair bride's faith.

And the venerable clergyman, when joining the hands of these graceful beings whose destiny he had just pronounced indissolubly linked together, spoke the blessing of the Church on the grave foreign count and his bride with a degree of fervor and confidence which the same benediction unconsciously lacked as he pronounced it over Evan and the noble girl who had just inwardly plighted her troth to the whilom bridegroom of Winifred Herbert.

The good clergyman's forty years' experience had made him quick-sighted in his observation of others, and his kindly heart misgave him as he noted the countenance and demeanor of the striking-looking, but unquiet and stern young man.

He marked the sudden uneasy glances passed round.

The impatient gesture with which he had received the fallen ring.

The passing displeasure that his face had expressed at Laura's involuntary shudder at the occurrence, and he predicted no happy future for that splendid young creature at his side.

The ceremony was over.

The knot was tied.

The names were fixed to the legal documents, and the brides had blushed and smiled beautifully as they signed for the last time the maiden names so dear and familiar to their eyes and fingers.

And Evan—he too had for the second time placed his signature to such a document as that.

Did a pang of remorse or fear seize him?

Did the pale image of Winifred rise between him and the page, and the mist before his eyes obscure the characters he wrote?

Certain it was that they were not his usual bold, free penmanship.

And when the book was closed, and the bridal procession was about to be formed, he stood for a moment, immovable and abstracted, by the table where these formalities had been transacted.

Laura looked pained and alarmed at the strange pause.

The spectators glanced meaningly at each other.

Sir William, hastily advancing, touched his son's arm to recall him to his duty.

"Evan, the Count is gone," he whispered.

The young man started, bent down with a look that brought back the color to his bride's cheek, and taking her hand led her from the vestry, with a proud grace and apparent devotion of manner that silenced all surmises as to the cause of his strange embarrassment.

The carriages were filled once more, and one by one drove rapidly back to the house where there was to be enacted the remaining scenes in the drama of that eventful bridal morn.

The doors were already thrown open to admit the bridal party, and the carriages drove up in such quick succession, and the crowd which had collected again round the portico was pressing so eagerly in their curious anxiety to gaze at the brides and their train, that the servants had little leisure or opportunity to notice every individual that entered the wide hall.

But their attention was even yet more diverted by a sudden rush and heave of the little crowd, and a cry of "Stop thief!" which was raised by a small lad, who declared he had seen a man run out of the group with a purse in his hand.

The interruption was but for a few moments, for the attraction of the gay scene within, and the brilliant guests without, was too powerful for so common-place a circumstance as a pickpocket's peccadillo to vie with it in vulgar estimation.

And so the gaze and the sharp criticisms went on so long as the carriages set down their burdens, and then the door was shut and the throng dispersed, hopeless of any further excitement for some hours.

Perhaps they might be right.

In the usual course of things they undoubtedly would have judged correctly.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE wedding guests had been conducted into the brilliant suite of the drawing-rooms, which were all thrown open, except that last and smallest and most beautiful of the apartments, Laura's boudoir.

That room was kept sacred to the fair mistress of the mansion, and in it were assembled the brides, their newly-made husbands, Sir William and Lady Lloyd, and the good clergyman who had just united the couples.

He was an aged, but still hale man, who had known the deceased Count de St. Hilaire in former days, and remembered Paul in his early childhood, though Laura had been an infant when they quitted England, and were lost sight of, by him.

But Paul, true to his strong, loyal self, and the attachments and friendships which had descended to him with his name, had sought out his father's honored pastor, and thus, as it were, associated that father with the most momentous action of his life.

"It seems as if twenty years of my life had rolled back," observed Mr. Strong, as he stood with Paul near the couch on which Laura and Evan were sitting.

"You and your sister might stand for living portraits of what your father and mother were when I first knew them.

"God grant, my children, that your lives may be as happy and honored, and, less brief than theirs."

"At least, dear sir," said Laura, with one of the bright, sweet smiles which sometimes gave a softer and most irresistible charm to her face, "Paul and I have an hereditary claim to resemble our parents.

"One of their old and valued friends has united us this day to the children of another friend.

"We surely may feel safe so far as it is possible to trust the future."

"Alas!" said the old man, sadly, "who can tell in the first brightness of youth what may await us?

"But we can at least tell one thing, my dear young lady, that every trial will bring a blessing with it, if we will let it."

Laura's eyes instinctively turned on Evan, and she murmured softly, "I could bear every sorrow but one."

"What is that?" whispered the bridegroom, as Mr. Strong and Paul turned to the part of the room where Lucy and her parents were standing.

"What is that, my own?" he repeated. "May I not guess that it is our separation?"

"That would be very dreadful, Evan," she replied, with a sad smile; "but it would be still worse if you proved less noble and good than I believed you. That would kill me."

Evan frowned slightly, but the young bride looked so splendidly beautiful, there was such triumph to his pride in having won such a glorious prize, and her devoted love spoke so plainly in her very doubts which had galled him, that he could only press more fondly the hand he held, and whisper a tender chiding for her self-tormenting.

But the fit was once more strong on her mind.

The gloom and terror of the morning had returned, and she could not, even in the light of Evan's—her husband's—presence, throw it off at pleasure.

"Evan, I feel such a strange horror over me!" she said, shuddering.

"I could almost fancy what people feel when hysterics come on them; I can scarcely keep myself from a foolish fit of weeping, and my heart is very heavy and cold."

"You are overwrought, love, over-excited," said Evan, though his own face grew pale with uneasy consciousness.

"But my Laura is too wise and strong to give way to such weakness.

"What will her brother or her friends think if my bride seems like a weeping victim instead of a happy wife?"

Laura smiled, and repressed the trembling sob that came to her throat.

But even then she had an uneasy feeling that Evan dreaded more the observation and remarks of others, than sympathized with her depression for her own sake.

When Paul returned to the sofa, it was a relief to both.

"Laura, dear, it is time we appeared in the other rooms," said her brother; "there will not be too much time for the breakfast before we must leave our friends. Are you ready?"

"Quite," she replied.

Laura was herself again, at least outwardly; the idea of strangers' eyes being on her acted the reverse to its usual effect,—it restored her to self-possession instead of destroying it.

Paul led the way with Lucy on his arm, and Evan followed with Laura at a few paces' interval, but so few that he was in the doorway before Paul had leisure to remark some unwonted attendants waiting at the threshold, or receive an answer to the question which their strange appearance at that moment brought to his lips.

"Who are you, my good fellow?" he demanded.

The man addressed pushed past the first couple, and suddenly laid his hand on Evan's shoulder.

"Evan Lloyd," said he, "you are my prisoner."

Laura did not speak, nor scream, nor faint; she stood still, gazing at Evan's pale face, and waiting for his answer.

It was a minute, perhaps more, ere it came, and then the young man tried to shake off the hand which held its grasp like a grappling-iron.

"This is madness!" he cried, fiercely. "Unhand me, rascal!"

"On what charge do you dare to arrest this gentleman?" asked Mr. Strong, who was immediately behind Laura.

"On that of murder," replied the man, gruffly,—"the murder of Henry Allnutt, and of arson into the bargain, by way of completing the crime."

A scream of agony, a fall, was now heard.

It was not Laura from whom the shriek of agony came.

It was not to the stricken bride that the blessing of unconsciousness was granted; no, it was the wretched mother whose heart and brain were thus stunned by the sudden blow, and whose fortitude could not survive the fearful danger of her first-born.

Sir William quietly raised his insensible wife, and carried her into the adjoining dressing-room.

That patient, devoted wife was the being who claimed his first care, his most devoted love.

Even in that moment of terror he would not leave her to another's tending till life was restored, and their departure was unheeded by the horror-struck group.

Laura's faculties seemed locked up in mute astonishment at the terrible charge.

She stood with lips parted, and pale, rigid features, staring at the fearful men with those large, dark eyes, that blazed like fire.

Evan still held her hand, but his bold self-possession and reckless daring were gone for the moment, and his form seemed struck as with catalepsy, and he neither spoke nor moved.

Then Paul de St. Hilaire hastily placed Lucy's trembling form in the arms of the good pastor, and stood, stern and tall, before the man who had brought such fearful ruin and disgrace on those he loved best on earth, such shame on the name of De St. Hilaire, in the person of its beautiful, proud daughter.

"Speak," he said, in a low, harsh voice—"speak, man! Is this thing true?"

"The question is an insult," said Evan, haughtily, for he had now collected himself. "I decline to answer it."

"Coward!" said Paul, exasperated beyond patience—"coward and villain, to refuse what is the poorest reparation in your power.

"If you escape other punishment, you shall answer to me."

"Never fear, sir," said the man, who was no other than Jonas Harper; "we've got the proofs safe enough.

"He won't want your interference, I can tell you. The law will do for him."

Mastering his passion at the coarse rejoinder of the man, Paul took his sister's cold hand, and strove to disengage it from its tight clasp on Evan's arm.

"My poor darling," he said, "come with me.

"This man's very touch profanes you."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Laura, starting at her brother's gentle violence. "Evan speak to me.

"I will believe you, only say you are innocent, that this is some foul plot."

"Your brother has chosen to answer for me," said Evan, coldly.

"Choose between us, Laura. I will not be bullied; no, not even now."

The girl looked in his dark sullen face, and felt instinctively that he was really guilty.

And worse, far worse—impenitent and hard in his guilt.

Her white face was terribly convulsed, and she shook in every limb.

"Paul, Paul, have mercy! he is my husband—think of that," she said, imploringly.

"I dare not, lest I take justice into my own hands, and cheat the executioner of his prey," he replied fiercely.

Laura fell on a chair behind her, motionless and speechless.

Mr. Strong advanced towards them, with the calm dignity of his office and venerable age.

"Young man," he said, calmly, "dare you share the crime you condemn?

"Is there not murder in your heart, even as there may have been on this unhappy man's hands—the curse of blood?"

"Sir," said Paul, haughtily, "when the honor of a family is outraged, we do not go to the Church for counsel or for vengeance."

"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord," repeated the clergyman.

"Paul de St. Hilaire, from Him doth all honor come, and before Him earthly pride is vanity.

"I charge you, in His name, forbear from your cruelty to that unhappy, stricken girl.

"Look on her, and on the young creature you have just sworn to protect and love, and then say whether you can add to their great woe by your unrighteous passion."

Paul turned his eyes on Lucy.

She was sitting in the high-backed chair where Mr. Strong had placed her, with her white face pressed against its crimson cushions.

She shivered as he slowly approached her.

"Paul," she said, "Paul, he is my brother."

"And she is my sister, Lucy, my wronged, outraged, disgraced sister," he replied; but the voice was softer and sadder than the hard fierce tones of the moment before.

Lucy turned imploringly to Laura, whose eyes were fixed on her brother's stern countenance with a strange look.

The half pride in his noble, devoted zeal in avenging her wrongs, half terror at his stern and just indignation.

Then she made one might effort of her grand, strong nature, and, slowly rising, approached him.

"Paul," said she, "his fate and mine were united only a few moments since.

"It is a terrible misfortune, very hard to bear; but disgrace can only come from our own deeds.

"My brother, this good man is right. He is my husband.

"I dare not break my vow. Guilty or not guilty, I have sworn to cling to him. I dare not desert him in this fearful hour."

There was something inexpressibly noble and touching in the resolute calmness of that pale girl's manner.

It spoke so unmistakably of a stern sense of duty, not of mere woman's blind devotion to a guilty lover.

Her eyes were studiously averted from Evan, and the slightest movement that betrayed his proximity brought a shudder to her whole frame.

Still, she would not desert him, nor permit the innocent bride of her incensed brother to suffer the penalty of another's crime.

"Look at her, Paul," she said, taking the trembling girl's hand and placing it in his.

"This is the time to cherish and comfort, not to add to her shame and sorrow."

Paul placed his arm round Lucy's waist, and held her tenderly to him, but his thoughts and sympathies were still with his outraged sister.

"Laura," he said, "can you love him still? Can you believe him innocent?"

Evan stepped forward to catch her reply.

"Speak, Laura," he said, bitterly, "and the truth.

"Let me know what value is to be attached to the professions you made.

"Methinks they were quite as free and frank as mine."

The taunt was not unmarked, but Laura's lofty nature was too completely engrossed by the awful position in which they were now standing to stoop to notice the unworthy shaft.

She did not even glance at Evan, as she said in a low, clear voice, "Paul, you are once more all I have left in the world to love."

Evan fell back. Winifred was avenged; for well he knew that she, the gentle, devoted slave of his every caprice—the soft, feminine, idolising girl, whose very life was bound up in his, would forgive everything, love through everything, endure all for his sake.

For the moment he felt inclined to wound that proud, noble girl in her most vulnerable part by precluding the truth.

Then some demon whispered to him that the most effectual punishment for her coldness would be to tie her to him still as the wife of the felon, the suspected murderer.

So he held his peace, and the momentary spasm of his features alone betrayed the intense suffering which the loss of that heart, which he had played with, triumphed over, and even tortured at his pleasure, cost him.

"Come, sir," said the officer, who had hitherto looked on with a sort of rude compassion on the beautiful wife of his prisoner, "I don't want to be severe on a gentleman in trouble; but you see I must do my duty and I can't wait any longer; I don't mind your having a cab, or even one of the gay traps at the door, if you like to do things respectably to the last."

"Paul, dear, dear Paul, will you not speak to him?" pleaded Lucy; "will you not tell him you don't believe him guilty—that you will save him?

"Oh Paul, Paul, for my sake save him!"

"Lucy," said Paul, in a grave but compassionate tone, "trust me, my beloved. I will do all that a just man can do. Even in this awful trial I will strive to remember that I am a Christian man."

"And the husband of this dear child," said the clergyman, gently.

"There is no fear of my forgetting that,"

said Paul, sadly. "My dear one, this is no place for you," he added; "nor for you, my sister."

He would have led his young wife from the room, but with a sudden impulse she sprang to Evan's side, and threw herself into his arms.

"Evan! Evan!" she cried, "you are my brother still. May God help you, and pardon you if this fearful story be true."

The mournful voice showed but too plainly that she knew, she felt, that her brother was not innocent, and this involuntary condemnation, yet loving forgiveness, brought something like a tear to the hot eyes of the prisoner.

He kissed the wet, pale cheeks again and again, and then for the first time spoke to Paul.

"Take her," he said, "and forget that she is my sister. From this moment, whatever is the result of this wild charge, you and yours are strangers to me. But I believe you will cherish and love this poor girl as she deserves."

Paul looked at the proud face of the unhappy man, and almost doubted for the moment that he could be guilty.

"You do me but justice, Evan Lloyd," he said. "My sister's wrongs shall not be visited on yours. Lucy, my poor darling, come with me; it is only useless torture."

Gently disengaging her from her clinging grasp of her brother's neck, Paul led her from the room, followed by Mr. Strong and the pale, wretched, but fearless bride of the unhappy prisoner.

"Now I am ready," said Evan, quietly, and with a haughty calmness that silenced the insolence which Jonas Harper was prepared to indulge.

"Do your duty, but no more, if you wish to make it as pleasant to yourself as it is annoying to me. You understand."

Jonas Harper was about to put in an insolent and taunting word, but the officer stopped him.

"You've done your duty," said the officer, "and will get what you want, I'll warrant. You're not a fellow to do anything for nothing. And now, I can do without your assistance to teach me my business. Will you have a carriage, sir, or a cab?" he added, turning to Evan with a respectful manner very different from what might have been expected from his station and occupation.

A brief reply settled the question in favor of the humbler vehicle, and in a few more moments the bridegroom drove, or rather was driven, from the house which he had entered not an hour before in all the proud exultation of one to whom beauty, talent, and wealth had apparently been secured for life. And now, in that brief space of time, the haughty master of that luxurious dwelling, the fortunate possessor of that beautiful and nobly-dowered heiress, and the heir to a baronetcy, was a suspected criminal and the inmate of a felon's prison.

The wondering crowd and the bewildered wedding guests gradually dispersed, with blank disappointment and astonished curiosity on their faces. And then that magnificent mansion was left to the death-like quietude, the more than mourner's wretchedness, of the unhappy relatives of the haughty Evan Lloyd.

CHAPTER XLIII.

CHARLES THORNTON has been lost to view for an inordinately long period; but the temporary oblivion in which he has been left is only in keeping with his character.

The curate of Llanover was in truth one of those quiet, unobtrusive, yet heroic beings who achieve conquests and perform deeds of self-denying usefulness of far more merit than the more brilliant and showy actions of less quietly intense and self-contained temperaments.

No visible suffering, no complaints or bootless struggles against obvious destiny, had followed his bitter disappointment in his love for Lucy Lloyd.

He loved her with the honest, intense affection of mingled admiration and esteem; and had he won her love in return, she would have been the one great happiness and object of his life.

But his own heart-sickness did not engross him to the exclusion of others' sorrows; and the visible anguish and final disappearance of his old favorite, Winifred Herbert, immediately before his temporary departure from Llanover, had touched him with sincere and permanent regret and uneasiness.

The young clergyman had always felt a brotherly regard and tender interest in the beautiful girl whose life he had once saved, and who appeared to him so childlike and winning in her simplicity and unconscious beauty of person and mind, and he had conceived painful suspicions with regard to Evan Lloyd's conduct towards her. At first he looked on the evident understanding between them more as the natural consequence of childish friendship, than of an unfortunate but passing attachment, which Evan's marriage with Laura de St. Hilaire would soon destroy; and he invariably reflected that the young Winifred Herbert was far less able to cope with the too probable penalties of obtaining Evan Lloyd's hand, than the more impetuous and stronger character of the French heiress.

If Evan were guilty, if his crime was ever brought to light, then Winifred's life or reason would too surely pay the price of a brief happiness.

Such had been Mr. Thornton's ideas during the months before the news of the very marriage he had thus anticipated; but the result of those tidings had completely upset those calculations.

He had heard, and not without a shudder, of Winifred's disappearance, of the dreadful fears daily gaining ground that she had committed some rash act, and of the dangerous illness that the shock, and consequent exposure to that cold night air on the night of her flight, had brought on Mrs. Herbert.

He had also striven to console the heart-stricken Llewellyn Herbert in his double sorrow, and had done all that man could do to assist in the search made for so many successive days, and even weeks, for Winifred.

And when at last the day came for his own departure for the long weeks that he had contrived to exchange with an old college friend, he bade the farmer adieu, with the strong assurance of his lasting interest in him and his, and his continued endeavors to learn the fate of the unfortunate Winifred.

"Nothing is impossible with God, my friend," he said; "and when all earthly means appear to fail, and hope leaves us, it is often the very moment when God displays his powers to help and console. Trust in Him, even though for the time He seems to slay you."

"I do—I do strive to say 'Thy will be done,'" replied the stricken man; "but, oh, Mr. Thornton, it is hard to be resigned to the worse than loss of an only child, and the heavy sickness of her desolate mother. My poor, dear wife, she will never look up again; her very heart is crushed and broken."

"Not so, Herbert," said Mr. Thornton; "believe me, He who smites, can heal. I leave you in sorrow. God can bring me back to you in happier circumstances. Only rest on Him."

The farmer bowed his head reverently, and strove to receive the consolation thus kindly and wisely meant, but his sorrow was too heavy and too recent to admit of aught but silence and submission; so far as human nature can be resigned to so terrible a trial as his had been.

Young as he was, Mr. Thornton had sufficient experience in the human heart to leave the rest to time, and to the consoling power of God, who is never deaf to the mourner's cry.

Mr. Thornton had been for a month or five weeks in London, and his own sadness had in some measure yielded to the irresistible influence of different scenes, busy occupation, and the strong will of a noble and religious mind.

Lucy was still—ever would be—dear to him.

And for all that, he could think of her with calmness and resignation as the wife of another.

The angry and jealous feelings that he could not at first wholly subdue, no longer disturbed his tranquil and unselfish spirit.

And amidst the constant pressure of the duties of a metropolitan parish, and the various distractions which London necessarily presents to those who are involved in the business or pleasure, the social or intellectual strife of that great city, he gradually lost the constant wearing sense of his blighted hopes which had depressed him at Llanover.

A paragraph in one of the fashionable papers, however, about the period of which we speak, somewhat disturbed this returning tranquility.

It ran thus:

"Some of our fashionable readers who may be of an age to remember the witty and accomplished M. de St. Hilaire, about twenty years ago envoy from the French Government to our Court, will learn, with interest, that his children are about to ally themselves, by a double marriage, to one of our old English, or rather Welsh, families.

"The present count and his lovely and accomplished sister are on the eve of marriage with the son and daughter of an ancient Welsh baronet, who, we believe, was a former friend of their noble father, and the wedding will, we are given to understand, be celebrated within a few days from this date."

Charles Thornton did not, according to romance rules, dash the paper on the floor, nor strike the table with his hand, nor stamp his foot on the guiltless carpet under his feet.

But he quietly laid the paper down on the desk before him, and gave a low, deep sigh.

It was nothing more than what he knew was inevitable.

But the reality brought a heart-sick, desolate feeling, which he had hoped had been long since overcome, and for a moment all looked very dark and hopeless.

The young clergyman had learned one great lesson in life's alchemy,—he could console his own griefs by consoling the sorrows of others.

And ringing the bell, after a few moments' bitter thought, he ordered the servant who entered to remove the breakfast things, and admit the applicants for his attention who generally thronged his anteroom at that hour.

One after another the humble visitors had audience.

Dispensary and hospital orders, bread and soup tickets, money, advice, or promises of early visits, had been dispensed among them, and then the door opened to admit a more important and self-conceited personage—the parish clerk, with the various routine business of the parish.

Funerals, christenings, and marriage banns were arranged; then came the final announcement.

"There is a wedding the day after to-morrow, sir, at eleven," said the clerk. "No great matter as to the people, but I'm afraid I must trouble you to be there, as Mr. Hopkins, who often does things for us, is ill just now."

Charles Thornton would certainly at that moment have preferred any duty on earth to a wedding.

But there was no help for it, so he signified his assent and then dismissed the official.

The morning had arrived, and Mr. Thornton, always the most punctual of men, was at the church at the appointed hour, and took his station in the altar, as the bride and bridegroom advanced up the aisle.

His thoughts were, however, unusually abstracted for the occasion, and he scarcely looked at the couple who stood before him, further than to observe that the bride was closely veiled, and that her head drooped with even more than maiden modesty.

The face of the bridegroom was, he fancied, not unfamiliar to him, but he could not at that moment recall the time and place where he had seen him, and the fact was too uninteresting just at that moment for him to bother over.

His thoughts would only wander to another and similar scene which he fancied might be enacting at that hour, when a fairer and more elegant bride, and a younger and handsomer bridegroom played the principal parts, and where the knell of his dearest hopes was forever sounded.

However, he began the service.

And though at first the words came low and mechanically from his lips, he gradually warmed to the sacred duty, and began the solemn, "I require and charge you both," in his usual impressive and rich, grave tones.

But he had scarcely reached the end of the first sentence, when a shriek, a low groan, and a convulsive, "Oh, God, I cannot," was heard, and the next moment the bride was lying prostrated at the foot of the altar.

The female who attended her to the altar, hastily advanced to the aid of the fainting girl, and put back the veil from her face to give her air.

Mr. Thornton also advanced to offer his aid, and scarcely had his eyes fallen on the poor girl's white face than he exclaimed, with an eager start of delight and surprise, only marred by the melancholy circumstances in which he found the missing daughter of Llanover Farm:

"Winifred!—is it possible that it can be you?"

"And what have you to object to it, sir?" was the insolent rejoinder that greeted his half-indignant question. "Is there any reason, sir, why the young girl should not get a good husband when she has a chance?"

"Yes, a very sufficient one, which I shall take care is enforced to some purpose," replied Mr. Thornton, calmly.

Evans glared at him.

"The young lady is under age, and cannot be legally married without the consent of her parents or guardians, and I shall stop the ceremony."

An oath escaped the man's lips, but the quiet dignity of the young clergyman repressed the full expression of his indignation.

"This is no time for altercation, for I now perfectly remember you, Mr. Evans," resumed Mr. Thornton.

"Carry the young lady into the vestry Barnes; and do you, madam, go with your friend, and try to restore her as soon as possible.

"This person and I will remain here till she is able to see us. It will be undesirable on her first recovery to life to see either of us."

Hugh Evans would have remonstrated, and took a step to lift up the prostrate form, but a stern look from Mr. Thornton, and a consciousness that he was in the clergyman's power, stopped him, and he sullenly followed the little procession with the curate to the door of the vestry, which was immediately shut.

And then the two men stood face to face, with grave and determined looks on one part, with fierce and gloomy moroseness on the other.

"Hugh Evans, do you know the crime of which you have been guilty, in decoying and keeping that young creature from her home and parents?" asked the clergyman, sternly.

"I am not accountable to you, sir; but, if I were, I believe you would be puzzled to prove the slightest misdemeanor on my part."

"To marry a minor without her guardian's consent is in itself a misdemeanor," said Mr. Thornton; "but in this case you have gone further.

"You have evidently detained her from her home against her will, and in a most inhuman manner disregarded the anguish of her parents and friends. However, your plans are happily frustrated ere it is too late."

"You want a turn at the same game, do you?" said Hugh Evans, with his cold, bitter sneer.

"Ay, trust a parson when a pretty girl is concerned," he added; "but I don't mean to humor you in this instance.

"I have as much and a better right to take care of her, and what's more, I intend to do so, whether you think I'm right or wrong. Do you understand that?"

Mr. Thornton surveyed the man with a calm contempt more galling than any passionate rejoinder.

"You deceive yourself," he replied, coolly; "you have neither the right, nor what, in your idea, is more to the purpose, the power to detain Miss Herbert from her parents.

"I shall take charge of her restoration to them myself, and you are fortunate to escape without further punishment."

"It is you, meddling parson that you are, who are interfering in matters which do not concern you, and which you do not understand," said the overlooker, angrily. "Perhaps you are doing the most irreparable mischief in your power to the girl in crossing my schemes for saving them all from disgrace and ruin. I tell you you'll get small thanks for your pains; and, what's more, the girl will tell you so too, and won't go with you. Besides what power have you to force her?"

"That will soon be settled," replied Mr. Thornton, quietly. "If Winifred wishes to be your wife, it can easily be managed in a more respectable and proper manner, and you know rather too much of the world to suppose that I or any other man can be imposed on by such empty bravado as yours. When she is herself again, the truth can soon be ascertained."

Hugh was about to speak, but then a change came over his mood, and he merely bowed his head with a contemptuous smile, that the curate could not quite interpret.

He then moved nearer the vestry door, and knocked gently for admittance before Mr. Thornton could interfere, and Matilda Pearce quickly opened it at the summons, though she stood in the doorway so as to prevent any entrance.

"How is she?" he asked, in a low voice.

"Coming to herself," was the reply, "but very weak, and almost unconscious. You must not attempt to come in at present."

"I can wait," said Hugh; "only be so good as to prepare her as soon as possible to see me and that gentleman," he said, pointing to Mr. Thornton. "He has a fancy for making folks confess what he wants to hear, whether it is true or not, and 'tis a pity he should be balked of his vocation."

The words were spoken with a tone and look which Matilda perfectly understood; but she replied quickly, "Very well, I will call you when she is well enough;" she then re-entered the vestry, closing the door after her.

For a quarter of of hour or more Hugh Evans paced the aisle before the vestry door, his eyes wandering about the church as if expecting some sudden apparition to disturb the stillness that reigned in that sacred place, while Mr. Thornton quietly sat in a pew near the door, watching anxiously for the summons to Winifred's presence.

No sounds broke the stillness, save Hugh's heavy tread and the low murmur of voices within the vestry door, and the whole scene might have served for a Romanist confessional, with priest and penitents waiting to confess and be absolved, rather than a Protestant church open for a bridal party.

At length a hand was laid gently on the door handle, and at the sound both the expectants hastened to the spot.

It opened, and Matilda appeared, supporting the pale and trembling form of Winifred Herbert.

"I am ready," she said. "All will soon be over now; it matters not what suffering I endure for the few days that remain."

The words were addressed to Hugh, and her eyes were studiously averted from Mr. Thornton's grave gaze.

"You mistake, Miss Herbert," he said, stepping between her and the bridegroom; "you cannot marry without your parents' full consent. Winifred," he added, dropping the formal tone in which he had addressed her, "come with me, my poor child, let me take you home. Why did you leave your loving parents to such terrible agony and suspense about you? Come with me, and I will restore you to them. Whatever may be your errors, however great your imprudence, you will be gladly received."

Winifred's lip trembled, and the tears came to the end of her long eye-lashes as the curate spoke, but she did not look up or respond to his out-stretched hand; only a half-murmured "I cannot," betrayed her consciousness of his words.

Hugh stood surveying them with a supercilious confidence on his hard face.

"Will you not have pity on yourself and on your parents?" said Mr. Thornton, more sternly, yet with a tender sadness in his tone. "Winifred, this is unnatural; unlike yourself, unlike your sex; there is some strange mystery under all this. Do not cast away this chance of escape from the misery you have brought on yourself and your parents; break through the snare that have been so deeply laid to entrap one so young and innocent."

"You speak in utter and most confounded ignorance, Mr. Thornton," exclaimed Hugh, suddenly. "This young girl knows perfectly well that I did not induce her to leave her home, nor was it I that caused the misery you talk so much about. The best thing you can do, if you are so concerned for the old folks and for her, is to get the business you came for over as quickly as possible, and not meddle in what you have nothing to do with."

"If you mean I should unite this young girl to you, I shall certainly do nothing of the kind," replied Mr. Thornton, scornfully. "That part of your scheme I can and shall defeat, by at once informing Miss Herbert's lawful guardians of her position. But, Winifred, my poor misguided girl, you will not let me go to them without their child—their still fondly-loved, deeply-mourned child?"

"I dare not, I cannot—I am not worthy!" burst convulsively from the poor girl's lips. "Oh, let me go!—in pity let me go away!—and never let them know their wretched daughter lives to disgrace their name; only leave me to die in peace."

Charles Thornton looked on the trembling young creature, so beautiful as fragile, so pure in her every look and gesture, and inwardly execrated the man who could have heartlessly brought ruin and misery on such a being.

Every moment increased his desire to

rescue her from her present dangerous protector, though he well knew that he had no more power to control her movements, than the bold, reckless man, who had so narrowly escaped the success of his plans to secure her as his own.

"Come, Winifred," said Hugh, who read the young curate's thoughts with instinctive shrewdness, "this is only useless foolery. If this meddling young parson refuses to do his duty, there are plenty that will do it for him. Let us be off, and leave him to amuse himself with preaching to the old woman yonder. I have had enough of this nonsense."

Matilda Pearce had hitherto remained a silent spectator of the scene, but she now spoke in her usual calm, measured tones.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

WHICH WINS?

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MY SECOND SELF," "A SQUIRE'S LEGACY," "A PRINCE IN DISGUISE," "RED RIDING HOOD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

IT was a large house, with a curiously secret look about it, an excellent specimen of early Tudor architecture, its windows beautiful illustrations of the perpendicular style, its copings and gargoyles exquisite bits of antique carving; but notwithstanding its charming quaintness, few people coveted the honor of living in Thorneymede Manor.

It had the reputation of being haunted, for one thing.

For another, people in general were of the opinion that that must be anything but a happy existence which was passed under the shadow of its master.

He was known in the neighborhood as a recluse and a misanthrope, and dimly suspected of being an infidel as well.

His foot never crossed the threshold of a church, and, with one exception, no being from that outside world, which so wondered over him, was ever admitted within the precincts of the Manor.

Very seldom did Anthony Leigh himself appear outside these precincts.

Some half-dozen times within the year he might be seen, riding his stout gray cob on a leisurely inspection of his outlying farms.

Twice or thrice, trembling urchins, bound on unlawful nutting expeditions within the forbidden limits of Thorney Wood, would report having seen him pass, taking his daily constitutional down some long grassy ride.

Otherwise, Mr. Leigh might be said to live in his library, where he sat among his books, Sunday and week-day alike, poring over Pagan records of old times and sadder memorials of modern scepticism, and vainly seeking to borrow from them a salve for old wounds that smarted still.

Anthony Leigh had a history, of which the world knew most part, but not all.

He had had a stormy youth, with a threat of disinheritance hanging all through it, like a sword of Damocles over his head.

That came, perforce, to an end when, at twenty-seven, to avert the failing of the fetishon, he had married the woman of his parents' choice—a neighboring heiress, no longer young, whose staid and Christian character would, it was hoped, exercise over him an influence for good.

An influence Anne Leigh certainly did manage to exert over her husband, her junior by eight years.

Whether it were an influence for good is an open question.

It changed the reckless gay young fellow into a sour silent man, a cool and confessed sceptic.

As might be expected, they were not particularly happy together.

The household at Thorneymede, outwardly decorous, was inwardly divided against itself—a bad school for children's up-growing.

Perhaps it was as well that there was but one offshoot from the stem.

This was a son, a spirited handsome lad, loved by both parents with the silent hard intensity of narrow souls, yet making no link to draw them together, the teaching of one spoilt by the other, the teaching of both spoiling the boy.

Walter Leigh was twelve years old when his mother died, and a sudden slackening of the curb made itself felt in the household of the Manor.

The boy went to school, the servants were put on board wages, while their master traveled for a time.

He spent a week in one place, a month in another.

It was nearly a year after his wife's death when he found himself, at autumn, in an old town on the Rhine.

Some English acquaintances turned up in it, who made the place very pleasant to him.

These in time introduced some Germans to him.

With one of the latter, a burly Bavarian Herr Major, Anthony Leigh went strolling out at evening along the Rhinebank.

The first finger-touch of winter had been laid upon the landscape.

Vintage and harvest alike were gathered in.

The sky and river were dazzling in their azure, and the cherry-trees beside the path shook leaves of red and orange against that background of blue.

The two men strolled along, cigar in mouth, till they reached an old balconied house, sentinelled by solemn poplar-trees shrouded in roses and clematis, which the Herr Major claimed smilingly for his own, and into which he invited Leigh to be introduced to his wife and family.

A tolerably large family the Major appeared to possess—thirteen blond heads, thirteen ill-clothed bodies, six-and-twenty big blue eyes—six boys and seven girls—one of them Anthony Leigh's fate.

She was the second-eldest of the Major's olive-branches, a slim creature of seventeen with the grace of a flower and somewhat of the look of one in the curve of her long white neck, the transparent tinting of her skin, the dash of color in her blue eyes, and little bright blond head.

Just a simple girl in a white gown—a mere child compared to the man of forty.

Yet the one woman in the world for him from the very first moment that he saw her.

There is no need to follow the course of Anthony Leigh's courtship.

The circumstances of it could have but one end.

The Herr Major, Thekla's father, was joyfully ready to reduce his baker's dozen to a round one.

His wife wept at the thought of parting with her daughter, but bent resignedly to the decree of fate.

The suitor was rich—enormously rich from a German point of view—well-born, entirely devoted, and sufficiently young and good looking—what more could the heart of girl desire?

Thekla never said what.

She bowed her head in silent pale submission to the general decree.

Anthony brought his young wife home, and snatched one year of Paradise from earth.

At the end of that time a daughter was born to him, and called, by his wife's wish, Augustine.

"It was my father's name," Thekla Leigh said, with a flush in her cheeks.

Her husband accepted the explanation without misgiving, not sorry that the child should be called by some other than its mother's name.

There was but one Thekla in the world for him, and he desired no second.

But, in less than six months later, that one was taken from him.

Inflammation of the lungs, sudden and violent, had ended the brief simple life.

A discovery Anthony Leigh made shortly after his wife's death snatched from him even the mournful joy of dwelling tenderly on her memory.

In putting away some trifles of hers which recalled too vividly his loss, he came upon a book—the poems of Schiller—a slim red-covered volume which he had never seen before.

He opened it, found writing on the fly-leaf, and set himself to decipher the German characters, blurred somewhat by the absorbent nature of the paper.

Just two lines—"Thekla, from her Augustin"—and underneath, in his wife's delicate girlish hand, just two words—"My Heart's Darling."

So little, but enough—more than enough.

Floating clouds of doubt, elements of evil, harm'less before, crystallized suddenly in Anthony Leigh's soul into an insoluble hardness.

His wife's heart had never been his; she had given him only the shell of the pearl; the jewel had lain in another man's keeping.

The happiness he had dreamed of as the one pure and precious thing in his barren length of life was only a dream after all—he had but been worshipping at an empty shrine!

He dropped the book into the drawer again, and locked it away, and all that was best in him with it.

Henceforth, such affection as he showed was given wholly to the boy Walter.

His baby daughter he never cared to see.

He never addressed the child by name, nor spoke of her, save as Miss Leigh.

He provided for her wants, inquired at set times about her progress, was strictly just to her—and no more.

Walter had taken kindly to his little sister, and tried twice or thrice to bring her more under her father's notice, but with such ill results that he was not inclined to repeat the experiment, especially as the time soon came when it was expedient for him to deprecate his father's anger rather than heedlessly incur it.

His was a second edition of his father's stormy youth.

It is quite possible that Walter had discovered a quicker way of getting over the ground on the road to ruin, for the young man came to the end of his tether sooner than the old had done.

His twenty-second birthday saw a violent final quarrel between him and his father, a quarrel which ended in Walter Leigh's abrupt departure from the house which he never entered more.

A few months later, in a cool and casual fashion, without a flicker of the eyelid, a tremble of lip or voice, Anthony Leigh announced to his butler that his son was dead.

He desired that startled functionary to convey the information to the nurse, and also her master's wish that she should at once procure the necessary mourning for Miss Leigh.

The little girl cried bitterly when the fact was made known to her.

The death of a favorite puppy had enlightened her somewhat concerning that dread mystery.

Frisky was gone, buried in a box under the ground, and should never see him again; and she understood the same of Walter.

For days she went about, a pale little image of grief, in her black frock and black ribboned pinafore.

Days during which the county tongues were busy with dead lad's name and history.

The matter was discussed freely in all its bearings.

The voice of general opinion condemned the—seemingly—callous father.

Outsiders saw a reason in his own wild youth for extra forbearance on his part and long-suffering of his son's.

The young fellow had been a favorite with all not called upon to bear the weight of his misdeeds.

A nine days' wonder the story set afloat, and a fertile source of gossip, which did not fail to make capital of Anthony Leigh's foreign marriage, his unnatural behavior to the child Augustine, his "queer ways," his misdirected studies, and misanthropical seclusion.

This dish of scandal was still being served to stranger guests, when the master of Thorneymede contrived to bring himself again under the notice of his neighbors.

He received a foreign letter, and thereupon set out upon a journey.

For eight years past he had scarcely stirred beyond his own walls.

This sudden movement made a noise in the quiet round altogether disproportioned to the cause of it.

A week after Mr. Leigh's departure there came a letter from him to Mrs. Roberts, the butler's wife, herself cook and housekeeper at the Manor.

In it her master informed her of the death of his sister, Mrs. Malet, which had just taken place in Paris.

He further desired her to have rooms prepared for the reception of that lady's daughter, and of a governess whom he intended to bring from London to instruct his niece and Miss Leigh, now of an age, he believed to benefit by her teaching.

"Dear, deary me!" Mrs. Roberts said, shaking her head, as she folded up the letter.

"Isn't it sad to see how they're fallen' off, one after another? This is the third death in the family within a few years!"

"What's become o' him?" Roberts asked stolidly, taking up the envelope and leisurely perusing the postmark on it.

"Malet? Oh, goodness knows! He was a bad lot, and there was a fine set-out when Miss Fanny ran off with him."

"Was he 'andsome?"

"I never liked his looks," Mrs. Roberts declared impartially, "though there was them besides Miss Fanny that was greatly took by them.

"Light hair and moustaches, hook nose, an' eyes that 'ud pierce ye through."

"Humph!" grunted the butler. "I wonder what she'll be like?"

"The daughter? She'll favor the Leighs, most likely, as the master takes her up.

"He hated Malet like poison, though 'twas himself brought the fellow about the place."

"Why, then he'd think himself in duty bound to look after her," Roberts said, with a shrewd insight into his master's character, "seein' she wouldn't be there but for him, d'ye see?"

"I wish he'd thought duty before then," returned his wife, tossing her head.

"If he'd done his duty by that unfortunate boy, d'ye think he'd 'a' been what he was, or did as he did?

"But it's always the way," she continued irrelevantly, "the worse a man is himself, the better he expects every one round him to be.

"Don't I know what he was in his young days?

"And then for him to be so hard on Walter! I'm glad he's the decency to get a governess for missie, any way; 'twas time to see about it.

"And the way he treats that child—the neglect of him, and the hardness, the way he looks at her if he meets her in the corridor—it makes my flesh creep, it do, as sure's my name's Hannah Roberts! An' him so fond of her mother, by the way!

"Augh, ye're bonnie bargains, nine out o' ten o' ye! I declare I can't abide men!"

With which declaration—whereat her spouse grinned quietly, taking it evidently for what it was worth—Mrs. Roberts bustled away to provide for the comfort of the coming travelers.

On the second night following they arrived; Mr. Leigh grim, taciturn, dictatorial as usual, a pretty child in French-fashioned mourning-dress, who looked nine, but was really three years older, and a portly pleasant-looking woman of about forty-five, in a sort of modified widow's garb, who soon became favorably known in the neighborhood as "that good creature, Mrs. Baldwin."

Little Augustine Leigh's life grew in human interest and simple pleasures from the advent of these two, and in their society more than twelve years of it glided calmly and not unhappily way.

CHAPTER II.

"YOU understand perfectly what I wish now, Fletcher?"

"Ahem—yes—I think so!" Mr. Fletcher answered thoughtfully.

"You have noted down the conditions?"

"I've got a tolerably accurate draft of the whole, I think," the lawyer said, looking, still in half-abstracted fashion, at a sheet of foolscap, partly covered with small close writing, which lay on the desk before him.

The two men were sitting in the library at Thorneymede, at a table in a window, covered with books and papers.

Mr. Leigh sat facing the light of a May evening, fresh and sunny—which brought out his face and figure in strong relief against the background of brown leather-covered books.

His eyes were brown, and dark, but deep-set, bright, and piercing; his features large, but formed with a certain delicacy; and iron-gray hair, moustache, and whiskers lent a touch of dignity to the shrewd-looking face.

The lean nervous hands, clasped on the calf cover of the volume before him, formed a very marked contrast to those of the man who sat opposite.

These were white, plump, and pleasant-looking, like their owner—a man of fifty or thereabouts—round, rosy, with a half-bald head and honest blue eyes, dressed in decorous black.

Mr. Fletcher was Anthony Leigh's lawyer, and the only person whose visits were received at the Manor House.

It was even possible that, in his own hard suspicious way, the master of the Manor liked him; there were few people who did not like Edward Fletcher, and he brought an atmosphere of freshness and brightness and heartiness even into the gloomy precincts of Thorneymede.

Mr. Fletcher was a scion of one county family, and had married the dowerless daughter of another; so that his position was very satisfactorily defined, and all "the best people" stopped their carriages at intervals before his big comfortable-looking red-brick dwelling in Thornton High Street.

He looked a little puzzled now, leaning back in one of the old leather-covered chairs, scratching his chin, and thoughtfully staring at the sheet of blue foolscap before him.

"You've made no mention of Monk's Grange. That goes to the heir-at-law, of course?" he said, in a slow pondering sort of way.

"Of course," Mr. Leigh returned shortly.

"And that is—is it James Leigh, or Gerard, who comes next?"

"Gerard claims to be my heir presumptive, I believe," Anthony Leigh said, with a sort of sardonic bitterness in his tone an unwonted dark flush upon his face. "Have you got it all right now, Fletcher? Better read that last note you've made again, perhaps; it's one of the most important, and you seem a little in the moon to-day," he added, with rather a hard smile.

"Not a bit—not a bit!" Mr. Fletcher said good-humoredly, answering the Squire's bitter mirth with a genuine laugh, full and jolly.

"This is the substance of the last clause, I take it;" and he read again a lengthy sentence, couched in lawyer-like phraseology but sufficiently intelligible to be thoroughly understood by Mr. Leigh, who sat listening, his thick gray eyebrows drawn down and the dark eyes under them gleaming like sparks of fire, till the voice stopped, and he nodded assent with a firmer closing of his lips.

"Yes, you've got it all right so far; I think you'll have to make another note to this effect—that I wish the will, and all its contents and provisions, to be kept entirely a secret for the space of one year after my death—not to be produced, or opened, or the gist of it explained to any one till the day arrives on which I shall have been buried twelve months.

"I leave the will in your hands, in fact, as a secret trust; you must draw up an instrument to enable you so to return it."

"But—excuse me, Leigh," the lawyer broke in—he was sitting, nibbling at the top of his pen, a disturbed, a disapproving look upon his face—"I don't think that's quite fair to your daughter, upon my word I don't!

"Leave her in ignorance of what may so vitally affect her—blindfolded, unguided—no, really; the rest goes hard enough on her, though it may be for her good, as you say; but you must re-consider this—it's not fair!"

"In my opinion it's perfectly fair," his client said, in a cool hard voice, with a sombre sparkle in his eyes.

"If Mr. Fletcher had had his wits about him, he would have remembered that Anthony Leigh's keenest joy was the joy of battle—flat contradiction his besetting weakness—opposition the cold air which hardened the red metal of his will into absolute unbendingness.

But Mr. Fletcher was disturbed and upset just now, and he made a false move, and forfeited all chance of his game by it.

"I suppose you will admit that I have a perfect right to dispose, as I think fit, of my own property?"

"Oh, certainly!" the lawyer agreed rather distantly.

"Very well. You will also admit, no doubt, that a young lady who enters into matrimonial engagements within a year of her father's death deserves any discomfort that may befall her?

"Very well. Then what becomes of your plea of unfairness?

"She will know my wishes as soon as it is necessary for her to know them—as soon as it is proper for her to act on them, and that, I should say, is soon enough.

"My wishes are that all knowledge of the contents of my will be kept from every person but yourself for the time I have stated, and that a sufficient sum be allowed during that year for the maintenance of this house exactly as I leave it.

"You understand now what I really wish?"

"I understand. I'll bring the document

complete on Saturday, and you can sign it whenever you like.

"But I hope, my dear Leigh"—the cloud cleared off the lawyer's pleasant face as he laid his hand cordially on his client's slight firm shoulder, "I hope sincerely that it may be many a year before this evening's work is turned to use."

Anthony Leigh shook his head half amusedly, as it seemed, and a sarcastic smile unbent a little the line of his iron mouth.

"Is life so good a thing that one should care to prolong it into perhaps second childhood?" he asked, with a sort of calm contempt.

"What is there left to live for at my age?"

"A great deal, if you would only see it," Mr. Fletcher said earnestly. "You have health, intellect, and"—he hesitated for a moment—"hope in your child—sufficient materials for much quiet happiness, if you would only believe, my dear Leigh, that the dearest things we have lost may one day be given back to us, that all does not end at the grave."

"But I am happy to say I do believe that," Mr. Leigh asserted quietly.

"Then you ought to desire long life here the more, since you don't expect any hereafter!" Mr. Fletcher exclaimed illogically, and horror-stricken.

"On the contrary," his host affirmed, the hard smile lurking again about his mouth, "death is to me a dreamless rest after this fever called living, the end of much trouble and toil.

"It amuses me to see how much you pious people are afraid of dying; yet you say you know what it is you expect—whilst I, who believe is no hereafter, who go to meet simple annihilation, could give my hand to the conqueror to-morrow without fear or pang."

"Heaven forbid!" the lawyer exclaimed, with considerable energy.

He hastily snatched off his double eyeglass, and gathered up his papers. Anthony Leigh watched him, the smile broadening about his lips.

"You're rather shocked, Fletcher—isn't that so?—by the coolness with which I propose entering that other world of yours in what you consider so eminently unprepared a condition. Well, you can console yourself by thinking that 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread.'"

"Console myself?" the lawyer answered. "No, no—that would be poor consolation Leigh—very poor!" Good Heavens, no! I'll console myself by thinking that you've many a prosperous year before you still, and that you'll think better of this before—before this will comes into use."

"Before I die, in fact," Mr. Leigh said disdainfully, half-lifting his gray brows. "How much you fear that little word, Fletcher! A burly fellow like you—it does seem rather ridiculous, doesn't it? Well, if I thought any happiness could be found in delusion, I would let you keep that one of yours concerning my future conversion; but, as I don't, I'm bound to tell you that my death will find me exactly the in same state of mind that you find me now. Now that we understand each other, though, don't let my atheistical—that's the word, I believe—opinions frighten you away before your time. Stay and have a glass of dry sherry; you rather like that red seal, I think." He rang the bell as he spoke.

"No, no—I won't to-day, thank you Leigh," Mr. Fletcher said hastily. He snatched up a small secret-looking leather bag and possessed himself of his hat. "Some other time—Saturday, perhaps—I shall be most happy."

"The wine is here," Mr. Leigh announced imperturbably. "On this table, Roberts. Now, Fletcher, help yourself, and pass the decanter to me."

The butler disappeared, and the two gentlemen sat and talked, pleasantly enough, for some ten minutes more; then, as Mr. Fletcher rose again to go, Anthony Leigh laid his long sinewy hand upon the lawyer's black-sleeved arm, with a movement which gathered impressiveness from its very quiet and deliberation.

"Remember," he said, "not a word of this to your wife. The mere hint of such an arrangement would be sufficient to set her, with the best intentions in the world, planning some frustration of my views—her regard for my daughter being, I understand, of the warmest. I live out of the world, Fletcher—but I understand tolerably well, I believe, what goes on in it. Good-bye, till Saturday."

"Now who would have ever thought it!" the astonished lawyer soliloquised, as he trotted across the courtyard, and actively climbed into his cosy little phaeton.

"He's heard something—the man's heard something, as sure as fate—and this is the upshot.

"Dear me, when will Susan learn to keep her finger out of other folk's pies! And, of all people in the world, to cross Anthony Leigh!—might as well run your head against a stone wall—and better. Hope there's no mischief done; most likely there is, though.

"Girls are kittle cattle, and, where there's a choice between two men, a right and a wrong one, it's ten chances to one that they'll take the wrong."

CHAPTER III.

ON that same evening, while Mr. Fletcher sat taking his client's instructions for his will, two young ladies were issuing from the one large draper's shop which the little town of Thornton contained, a tall girl and a short one,—a dark girl and a fair—Augustine Leigh and her cousin Celia.

"I'm so sorry, Austine!" Miss Malet murmured, with a deprecating glance, at her companion as they turned up the pathway together. Oakley's millinery and general drapery establishment was situated towards one end of High Street, and Mr. Fletcher's house was equally near the other.

"Why?" Miss Leigh inquired, laughing. "I don't see anything to be sorry about."

"It's like your generosity to say so, dear; but that doesn't make it any the less nasty of me," Celia said softly. "And this isn't the first time it happened, either; I must take care it doesn't again."

"You mustn't take anything of the kind. Now, be sensible, Celia, and look at the matter from a common-sense point of view. What's the use of your pinching yourself when I've money in my purse?"

Miss Malet let the question slide.

"You can't have much in it now," she said, sighing, and hanging her pretty head.

"I assure you I have—plenty to last till next quarter-day; that's only five weeks, you know."

"I know; but it's disgraceful of me, all the same," Celia sighed plaintively. "I can't tell how I manage to outrun my income. Uncle is quite right in thinking a hundred a year ample for me, at least.

"I suppose I was foolish in not telling Oakley's to keep to a certain price when they ordered those things for me: but I had no idea they would be so dear."

"Now Celia," said Miss Leigh energetically, "if you don't stop talking like that I shall be angry.

"You know I never spend all my allowance; and it's no generosity on my part to give you what I don't want. Why, there should be no question on the subject at all between sisters, and we're the same, almost. I'm only too glad I had the money; it would have been so awkward, owing it to the Oakleys, and being in their power, as it were. I think there's nothing so humiliating as running into debt!"

The last sentences will give something of a clue to Augustine Leigh's character which owned more than a touch of her father's proud unbendingness.

Celia Malet said she had no adaptiveness in her, and perhaps Miss Malet was not far wrong.

She gave her cousin a half glance, not destitute of a touch of wonder, before she answered, sighing a little again.

"No, nothing," she assented softly. "It will be a warning to me in future, Austine dear; I promise you that. And you must let me return you those six pounds—it was six, wasn't it?—when I get my allowance next; I can't before, you know."

"I won't let you do anything of the kind," Miss Leigh said decidedly. "And that reminds me—— Show me your purse Celia."

"My purse?" Celia echoed, with a little upward look of innocent surprise. "Why, what—— I will show it you, of course, Austine; but"——she had opened obediently the little satin pocket slung by a cord of silk across her dress, and extracted therefrom a tiny sealskin toy which she had put into her cousin's hand—"I can't think what you want with it," she said, looking with soft wonder into Augustine's smiling face.

"I want this with it."

Miss Leigh had opened her own purse, and transferred a bank-note from it to Celia's empty one.

"Oh, no, Austy, I can't allow that! you're to bad—or too good, rather! Please take it back!"

"I sha'n't!" Miss Leigh delared smilingly, walking on. "I can't have you absolutely penniless for five weeks, you little goose! So just open your eyes and shut your mouth and take what the gods have sent you."

Celia slipped her arm within her cousin's, and gave it an affectionate little squeeze.

"You are such an old darling, Austine," she murmured, "and I'm so—so——"

"Ridiculous!" said Augustine calmly.

They walked on in silence for some minutes after that—two strongly contrasted, yet daintily-harmonious shapes.

Augustine Leigh was a tall girl, dressed in a prune cashmere gown, with a closely-fitting jacket of prune-colored velvet over it.

Her figure was large and fully proportioned, a model of health and vigorous grace—as natural as the Venus de' Medici's, and not very far from as perfect.

Her face was by no means so faultless.

The nose, though delicate, was insignificant—a slightly *retrousse*, decidedly irregular feature; the mouth was too wide, and somewhat too full—though the rich color and fine modelling of the well-curved lips might have induced even a captious critic to overlook this defect of proportion.

But the eyes were beautiful—those eyes from the Rhineland which Byron has sung—deep eyes of violet-blue, fringed with long silky lashes and shadowed by Greek brows of black.

And the skin called to one's mind the knight of Plympton's well-conned precept—one did "think of the peach" when looking at Augustine Leigh.

Her complexion seemed caught alike from her mother's milk-and-roses and her father's olive tints: just so much of brown was mingled with the blond as gave effect of a warm glaze on an oil-painting, and the mellowest richness to the downy damask of the cheek.

Her hair was brown, too dark to be called chestnut, but not too dark to show a gleam of red in every careless wave, in every one of the tangle of curls which shaded her low broad forehead, and showed under her plumed hat.

They caught a Titianesque splendor now from the afternoon sunshine as Augustine moved up the narrow street, with free step and head thrown back, erect and agile as a young Diana, dwarfing the small delicate figure at her side.

Nobody ever looked at Celia till they had well scanned her cousin; yet it is very certain that Miss Malet's face was the one which best bore criticism.

All Celia's features were regular and neat, her rosy mouth could pout or smile bewitchingly, her large green-gray eyes were shaded by long lashes a trifle darker than her abundant ash-blonde hair.

Those eyes were capable of considerable expression, and Miss Malet was by no means unskilled in the use of them; their most wonted aspect however was one of pleading, sweet deprecation—the look of an innocent helpless creature not sure of herself or of others, involuntarily appealing to the kindness of the strong.

For the rest, a pure, delicately-tinted complexion, a charming little figure, slight, but most daintily rounded, costumed with perfect taste—to-day in rifle-green, with large silver buttons on the velvet jacket, and dark green hat to match—hands and feet, miracles of smallness and shapeliness, always gloved and booted to the best degree of perfection; a soft caressing manner, an excellent temper, a wonderful tact; and one understands how, while filling a subordinate position therein, Miss Malet was a power in the household at Thorney-mede.

The soft gentle little creature, with her little loving ways, had even wound herself into Anthony Leigh's heart—so far as the fossilized nature of that organ permitted her to go—even exercised some occasional slight influence over him; far more, Augustine thought a little bitterly at times, than he permitted his own child to use.

Miss Leigh was not without her twinges of jealously on her cousin's account; she was by no means "a perfect woman," though, in some instances "nobly planned," indeed; and the peculiar position in which she stood was a fruitful source for such feelings; but she always got over them as quickly as she could, and hastened to make up to Celia for that momentary secret dislike to her by extra kindness, or some such present as that she had just given.

Augustine's conscience was at rest now, and her memory pleasantly busy, as might be guessed by the dreamy smile in her blue eyes under the shade of their long black lashes.

She was recalling a day, over three months gone by—a cool grey day in early spring.

Celia and she had walked into Thornton, just as they did to-day, and, as had become a sort of rule with them on such occasions, had gone up to Mrs. Fletcher's for a cup of afternoon tea.

Augustine lived the scene over again, saw it once more with visionary eyes, as she approached the familiar door; the old-fashioned drawing-room glowing with fire-shine, those unknown dark figures rising against the light, Mrs. Fletcher's cheery welcome, and smiling introduction of the two young men—"Mr. Geoffrey Basset of Wyfford, your next neighbor, Augustine—though, indeed, he doesn't trouble his neighborhood much!"—shaking a merry mob-capped head in mock disapproval at the handsome young fellow standing so meekly before her—and this is his cousin, Mr. Pallister."

What a new world, a new life, had begun for Augustine Leigh that day!

She remembered it all as if it were yesterday; the "cose," as Mrs. Fletcher termed it, round the fire, the fragrant orange pekoe, and rich pound-cake for which that pleasant woman's afternoons were famous, which tasted like nectar and ambrosia to the girl that evening—the sound of the gay voices—soprano, contralto, baritone—the jests, the fancy speeches, the light little outbursts of laughter.

She remembered with how strange a sense of dream and unreality she had sat, making one of the charmed circle, listening to Mr. Basset's light hearted talk, watching the firelight waver on her opposite neighbors' faces on Celia's blonde hair, and on the soft outline of her smooth pink cheek, on Raymond Pallister's dark locks and beard and thoughtful keen black eyes.

That wonderful day had been repeated "with variations" a great many times then; that air had been played so often that Miss Leigh, close count as she kept, would have been puzzled to calculate how often Mrs. Fletcher's drawing-room had sheltered the same party—the same with a difference.

Augustine could not approach the comfortable-looking old red brick dwelling now without a tremor.

This commonplace stout deal panel, painted a bad imitation of oak, opening upon an equally commonplace cumbrously-furnished hall, had come to be a sort of portal of Paradise for Augustine Leigh.

Her heart began to stir, to beat, the peach-bloom on her cheeks deepened to damask-red, as she stood a moment waiting.

The door swung back; so did another opening also of the hall; in half a minute Augustine found herself receiving an affectionate embrace from Mrs. Fletcher—a stout comely woman of middle age, childless, but more motherly than half the mothers one meets—in a whole one, she knew what she had been longing to know—they were in the room, waiting to shake hands with her as soon as Mrs. Fletcher let her go.

The foremost of the two was Geoffrey Basset, a straight, tall, clean made young fellow, with a fair close-cropped head well set upon broad shoulders, a long blonde moustache, and good gray eyes lighting up a hardy handsome face, fair skinned, but tanned with weather.

The red showed through this bronze when he took Augustine's hand, the white when he let it go and turned quietly away to give his cousin place.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Scientific and Useful.

RUST.—Steel knives which are not in daily use may be kept from rusting if they are dipped in a strong solution of soda—one part of water to four of soda; then wipe dry, roll in flannel, and keep in a dry place.

ICE ON WINDOWS.—To keep ice from windows, take a sponge or ordinary paint-brush and rub over the glass once or twice with a little cold alcohol. This not only keeps the panes free from ice, but gives the glass a fine polish.

ZINC.—A single plate of perforated zinc about a foot square, suspended over a gas jet, is said to retain the noxious emanations from burning gas, which, it is well known destroys the binding of books, tarnishes the gilding and vitiates the atmosphere for breathing.

ARTIFICIAL CORK.—A patent granted this year to a German covers a process of making artificial cork by thoroughly incorporating 68 parts of ground or powdered cork chips with 180 parts of boiling starch paste. The resulting plastic mass is pressed into forms and then dried in hot rooms.

PHOTOGRAPHS.—A Clevelander after experimenting for two years, has succeeded in his invention, which takes instantaneous and permanent photographs on any smooth surface by the action of electricity at an expense of one cent each. It is expected that the device will be especially valuable to lithographers.

THE SMELL OF PAINT.—To get rid of this objectionable odor in a chamber or living room, slice a few onions and put them in the centre of the room; close the doors, leave the window open a little, and in a few hours the disagreeable smell will have almost gone. Another method is to plunge a handful of hay into a pailful of water, and let it stand in the room over night.

UTILIZING NETTLES.—Among the many substances formerly considered valueless, but utilized by modern science is the nettle. This weed is now actually being cultivated in Germany, where its fibre is made in a variety of textile fabrics. A Dresden manufacturer has produced from it the finest thread known to the trade, of which a length of sixty miles weighs only two and a half pounds.

SAWS.—A late improvement consists in tempering and straightening saws at one operation. This is done by heating the saws to a proper degree, and then pressing them by a sudden and powerful stroke between two surfaces of cold iron—a drop press being employed for the purpose. The use of this mechanism effects a very considerable economy in the manufacture of the article.

Farm and Garden.

HOT LIQUIDS.—If you wish to pour boiling hot liquids into a glass jar or tumbler, it can be safely done by putting a spoon in the dish before you pour, but a draught of air must not reach it.

FODDER CORN.—A Missouri farmer recommends stacking fresh fodder corn with wheat or oat straw in alternative layers of a foot of the latter to three inches of former. He says there is no danger of spoiling, as the juices of the corn are absorbed by the straw, and the latter is rendered so palatable that cattle eat it all greedily without waste.

SULPHUR.—Some one who has tried it says it is a good plan to burn sulphur in places where milk is kept, especially if damp. The sulphurous acid evolved destroys the mildew, which, if not checked, will injure the flavor of cream and butter. In many damp cellars the mildew wastes the cream, so that the butter product is seriously decreased, besides the injury to quality.

LOSS OF FEATHERS.—Loss of feathers in fowls probably proceeds from deficient or unclean dusting arrangements. Fowls must have dust baths, and a pound of sulphur now and then mixed with the rubble or sand is excellent for keeping feathers in good order. A few grains of carbonate of potassa in water twice daily, and the application of petroleum ointment will produce a cure. Proper food is also necessary for the preservation of plumage. Food without husk, as Indian corn or soaked bread, if given exclusively, will bring on loss of feathers; barley, buckwheat, barley meal and shorts should be added. If the skin is bare and shows no growth of feathers, rub in oil and turpentine in proportion of three to one till the feathers commence a new growth.

SKIMMING AND CHURNING.—Milk should be skimmed, when set in a room kept at a temperature of sixty degrees, as it begins to get fairly sour, or just as it begins to thicken on the bottom of the pan. If it stand longer there is a loss of quality without any compensating gain in quality. The cream should be churned at once. The longer it stands the greater will be the loss of aroma from decomposition and evaporation of the volatile flavoring oils. Only the slightest acidity, if any, should be permitted in the cream before it is churned. Yet it is a common thing for people to let the milk lopper before it is skimmed, and to allow the cream to stand until quite sour before churning. Nothing but bad-flavored and rapidly-decaying butter can be made of such cream. Yet dairymen often let cream stand until it moulds without knowing the true reason that they always make poor butter.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

SIXTY-THIRD YEAR.

SATURDAY EVENING, FEB. 16, 1884.

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DAY-DREAMING.

Day-dreaming! Does it really exist in this present age of express trains, fast steamers, and telegraphs, when life is lived in a whirl of excitement and hurry, and there seems no time for anything but hard work? The very term seems out of place in these "go-ahead" days, when the dreams in which poets and painters would fain indulge have to be hustled aside for "work that will pay," and the thoughts of men generally are fiercely bent on learning the art of making money, as "every door is barred with gold, and opens but to golden keys."

Day-dreaming must surely have but little part in the life of to-day, and must be held as having belonged in its full perfection to a state of old-world quiet and contentment, when things jogged along quietly and calmly; to the age when Phyllis could sit a long summer's afternoon in her flower-decked porch, and dream bright, happy day-dreams; and Corydon did likewise, as, reclining under a leafy shelter, he watched his flocks and herds, or sauntered down the green lanes in the "gloaming" to meet fair Phyllis.

The Corydon of to-day is hardly able to catch the express train which is to bear him to the busy Phyllis, full of "important engagements," and into whose fair head the thought of day-dreaming never even enters.

We are told by the busy, practical people that "no good comes out of day-dreaming;" that we had much better go to work; that no one who gives himself up to it ever does any good to anyone. And much of this, no doubt, is true, as, unlike the lotus-eaters, we do not live in a land where it is "always afternoon"—a land where "all things always seemed the same," and where nobody ever did do anything but dream.

Nevertheless, some great enterprises have been carried out which were set down at first by these good, practical people as the maddest of all mad day-dreams.

One pleasant peculiarity of day-dreams is that they are always happy—always have the sunlight around them. It is of some noble deed, some grand discovery, some divine strain of music which is to render spell-bound those who hear it; some exquisite poem which shall speak to the very hearts of men; some grand picture which shall live forever in their memories; always of some glorious future that we dream. Then we wake up with a start and a shiver to the hard realities of life, and determine that we will not again give ourselves up to this very enchanting occupation.

A wise resolve, for, looking at the subject as the practical ones would have us look, it is, on the whole, rather a hurtful amusement, because it is so altogether fascinating, that if we once begin, it is almost impossible to leave it off, and the sober neutral tints of our every-day lives look doubly cold and gray by the side of these exquisitely-tinted pictures seen through a haze of golden light in our "dream-palaces."

After all, "life is real, life is earnest," and it is better and wiser to

> "Act, act, in the living present;
> Heart within, and God o'erhead."

SANCTUM CHAT.

EVERY great and heavy burden of sorrow seems like a stone hung around our neck, and yet they are very often like the stone that is used by the pearl-divers, which enables them to reach the prize and rise enriched.

—

"IT looks as if another short-hair frenzy was going to strike the ladies," says a New York letter-writer. "A good many in their 'teens now consider it the thing to cut off their hair and wear it curled close to their scalps, and yesterday I saw a row of bonnets in a milliner's window, each decorated with a little ruff of frizzed hair sewed under the rims at the back."

—

A WRITER in a Chicago paper, after carefully going over a mass of statistics, comes to the conclusion that the medical profession in this country is overcrowded, and endeavors to discourage young men from entering it. "There are now," he says, "60,000 physicians and surgeons in this country, or one to every 500 inhabitants. Indeed, every cross-roads, where a grocery or a blacksmith shop is located, has also the shingle of at least one medical practitioner, and in some cases more than one." This writer also recommends that the acquirements of every doctor should be thoroughly tested, and greater stringency should be exercised over those medical schools which give diplomas to those who are not qualified for them.

—

THE latest census reveals the encouraging fact that the proportion of the blind to the population has decreased with each successive enumeration since 1851, in which year account of them was taken for the first time. The decrease in the decade ending in 1881 was much greater than in either of the preceding decennial intervals, the number of cases returned on this latter occasion being 22,832, equal to one blind person in every 1,133.

—

MAN must have occupation, or be miserable. Toil is the price of sleep and appetite—of health and enjoyment. The very necessity which overcomes our natural sloth is a blessing. The whole world does not contain even a briar or thorn which Nature could have spared. We are happier, with the sterility, which we can overcome by industry, than we could have been with spontaneous plenty and unbounded profusion. The body and the mind are improved by the toil that fatigues them. The toil is a thousand times rewarded by the pleasure which it bestows. Its enjoyments are peculiar. No wealth can purchase them—no indolence can taste them. They flow only from exertions which repay the laborer.

—

IT is strange how vanity and ambition demonstrate themselves at times. A elderly woman, who had been nurse for the better part of her life in a local family, had, through her simplicity in attire and great frugality, been able to save a neat sum of money. In making her will, she devised an eighth of the whole for the purpose of embellishing her grave, already having provided during her life a showy and costly marble tombstone and a lot in her chosen cemetery. It is to be hoped that her spirit, freed from the shrinking modesty and simplicity which encompased it while bound in the flesh, is rejoicing at the beauty of the grounds which mark her resting-place, and finds a heavenly satisfaction in the fact that she is buried more richly and showily than her neighbors.

—

THE cultivation of flowers is of all the amusements of mankind the one to be selected and approved as the most innocent in itself, and most perfectly devoid of injury or annoyance to others; the employment is not only conducive to health and peace of mind, but, probably, more good-will has arisen, and friendships been founded, by the intercourse and communication connected with this pursuit, than from any other whatsoever. The pleasure, the ecstasies, of the horticulturist, are harmless and pure; a streak, a tint, a shade, becomes his triumph, which, though often obtained by chance are secured alone by morning care, by evening caution, and the vigilance of days; an employ which, in its various grades, excludes neither the opulent nor the indigent, and, teeming with boundless variety, affords an unceasing excitement to emulation, without contention or ill-will.

—

A BOSTON miss of 14 died the other day of too much study and brain work, and the doctor was smart enough to know what had killed her, and fearless enough to place it on record. This little girl, who was in the grammar school, under the head of "language" had to go through oral and written exercises, study of compound and complex sentences, reading from text-book and original compositions, recitations, writing, etc. In the mathematical department she studied powers of numbers, square root and its common applications, mensuration of the triangle, parallelogram, trapezoid and circle of the prism, pyramid, cylinder, cone and sphere, book-keeping, etc. Then she had to study history, forms of government, geometric problems, model and object drawing, music, and several other matters. And yet Boston is proud of her public system, and shuts her eyes to the fact that there is too much of it.

—

A FRENCH medical man who has just died at the age of 107, pledged his word to reveal the secret of his longevity, when no more, for the benefit of others. It was stipulated, however, that the precious envelope containing the recipe for long life was not to be opened until he had been buried. The doctor's prescription, now made known, is simple enough, and easy to follow; but whether it is as valuable as he pretends, is extremely doubtful. He tells his fellow-men that if they wish to live for a century or more, they have but to pay attention to the position of their beds. "Let the head of the bed be placed to the north, the foot to the south, and the electric current, which is stronger during the night in the direction of the north, will work wonders on their constitutions, insure their rest, strengthen their nervous system, and prolong their days." It is, he adds, to scrupulous attention to the position of his bed that he ascribes his longevity, the enjoyment of the most perfect health, and the absence of infirmity.

—

MR. STANLEY MATTHEWS, of the United States Supreme Court, gave a dinner to President Arthur the other night, and a Washington paper prints the bill of fare, every line of which is in French. This seems to be a wholly useless piece of affectation. Some dishes being French in origin, their names cannot, perhaps, be translated into intelligent English. Even this must be a not very frequent difficulty. But when it comes to oysters on the shell, lettuce, roast beef, partridges, cake, coffee, it is perfectly absurd to print them in anything but English. The French never print, when they can help it, the names of English dishes. In fact, they do not eat many. It is a sign of servitude to the French art of cookery that so many dishes are designated in French, but when so English a dish as roast beef, so American a dish as oysters on the shell, and ice cream, are put into French, even the American eagle has a right to show its claws and scream out a savage protest.

—

A VISITOR to the Paris establishment of a famous dog modiste in the Royal Palace, says that all day long a series of pugs and smooth-haired terriers arrive at her salons to try on their garments and have their paletots fitted. As they have occasionally, like their owners, to await their turns, small mats and rugs are scattered over the waxed floors, so that the little dogs may be comfortable while anticipating their interview with their modiste. They have several changes of dress in their wardrobe, which they wear according to the hour and temperature of the day. When they take their morning walk in the Bois with their mistress, the "correct thing" is a paletot of dark blue cloth, warmly lined with red flannel, and a military gorget coming high up under the leather collar, which is hung with bells. The monogram of the dog's mistress is no longer embroidered on one corner of the paletot. That is out of date—and why should a little dog be out of the fashion? So mortifying, you know, when it sees other doggies carrying their monograms in the middle of their back, the "correct" place. To complete this morning toilet a bunch of violets is fastened on the left shoulder.

—

THERE are various strange callings exercised in great cities by which people earn their daily bread, and that followed by what is termed the "waker-up" in Paris, is one of them. The wakers-up are generally old men past active work, and the winter is their best season. When the nights are long, and the comforts of a warm bed are apt to militate against early rising, the reveilleur sets out between three and four, taking his way through the suburbs adjoining the fortifications, mostly inhabited by laborers or artizans. His duty is to arouse those whose employment necessitates their being up before daybreak, and who, but for his services, might very frequently oversleep themselves. He calls them up by uttering a loud whoop or cry, and waits before a house to ascertain that it has been heard, either by the opening of a window or a door, or an answer from within. Every workman pays him a sou daily for his trouble. The profession of a reveilleur, though not, of course, a very remunerative one, enables, it is stated, a certain number of men, incapacitated for work by advancing years, to provide for themselves, without being in any way dependent on the charity of the public.

VIOLETS.

BY MARGARET GRAY.

Some little faded flowers,
Folded away with care,
A golden dream of bygone hours,
Those little violets were.

But now that dream has passed,
Like all things bright and rare,
And I have found at last,
That this was false as fair.

Won by a fairer face,
That fickle heart of thine,
Still I those faded blossoms place
Near to this heart of mine.

The words you said to me
Are said to others now,
Yes, while your lips so gently press
A younger, fairer brow.

Love and Beauty.

BY PERCY HERBERT.

"WHAT do you love me for?" said she.

"Because you are so pretty," said he.

She did not know whether she liked the answer or not.

Admiration is always so remarkably sweet to a woman.

She put her head down on his shoulder.

"Oh, Charlie!" she said. "If I were ugly—you think me ever so much prettier than I really am, you know—but if I were really ugly, wouldn't you love me? I should you. Oh, if anything hurt that dear face, or made you less strong or graceful than you are, I should love you even more, I know."

Men have no tact.

They can't help it, poor things!

The husband of a week laughed as he kissed the sweet upturned face, and said—

"Don't imagine all sorts of things. Why didn't you fall in love with that excellent gentleman who was all mouth and cheek-bones? Or with crooked little Jones? You like a big fellow, and one who was not absolutely hideous, instead; and I—I appreciate virtue and learning, but I did not love Minerva Bobbie in spite of that. I loved the prettiest little girl in the world, because she was the prettiest and sweetest. Kiss me."

She kissed him, but afterwards she said slowly and in a half whisper—

"I hope God will let me die before He makes me ugly. I could not bear to live if you did not love me."

They had not been married a month.

They were on their honeymoon trip even then, and they were very much in love—he as a man is, she as a woman is—and that is quite in a different way.

Not that I find fault with that.

It is but natural.

Men and women always do everything different—work, play, idle differently.

Why should they love alike?

But the knowledge of this fact doesn't come to a woman until her first love has been "wintered and summered," and the knowledge is seldom agreeable. But to return to our pretty heroine.

Nellie was loved.

It should have contented her, and she told herself so, but she would have been happier if Charlie had said just what she wanted him to say.

It made no difference to that honeymoon, however.

They walked, and chatted, and sat together in the moonlight.

They rowed on the river, and wandered through the woodland, and had such a summer as people never have but once, and then they came back to the city, and to their everyday life.

Ah, the sweet, commonplaceness of home life, when it is the home of married lovers.

And there was no cloud to mark their days for many happy months.

At last, however, the time came when they must be parted for a little while.

Charles found it necessary to go to O——, on business, and Nellie could not accompany him.

Charles did not like the parting, but he took it philosophically, as a man must, but Nellie nearly cried herself blind.

Only a few weeks, he said—it was to be two months.

Nellie gave the time its whole value.

When he had kissed her, she clung to him almost convulsively.

"If I should never see you again," she sobbed.

"My little one, don't be foolish," he said, and held her more closely to him then, and was off.

But he thought of her as the train flew away.

He thought of her as he trod the streets of a strange city, and sat alone at strange tables, and he dreamt of her all night.

But she wore his letter in her bosom.

Once his letter was delayed, and she was sure something terrible had happened, and was just saved from nervous fever by its hardy arrival.

Once hers did not come; he took it coolly at first.

"That confounded postman has made a mistake," he said.

But after several days, he concluded to make sure that all was right, and telegraphed—

"If well, answer at once."

Just then, if he could have sent his spirit home on the telegraph wires, he would have seen this picture.

His Nellie lying on her bed, listening to the doctor.

"I am sorry to say it is the small-pox, madam," said this gentleman; "but after all, under good treatment, it is no worse to have that than many other things. There is no danger in this case."

"That cruel disease," murmured Nellie, to herself. "Oh, Heaven, and Charlie loves me because I am pretty. I dare not tell him the truth."

The answer that came to Charlie's telegram was "All right."

Nellie sent it by the nurse, who agreed with her that there was no need of frightening the poor man.

"And I would not have him return now for any consideration," she said. "He might take the disorder."

But that was not all her reason.

Then there was a time when Nellie knew nothing.

Then—ah, what then?

Charlie only knew that as he was packing his portmanteau to return home, a letter was brought to him.

He thought it his wife's handwriting, and he had had no letter for many days.

He tore it open.

It began "Sir."

It was not from her; yet how like hers.

He paused before he read on.

"Sir—I have bad news to tell you. Your wife is dead. She caught the small-pox somehow, and it proved fatal. She was glad to die, because the disease makes people very hideous sometimes, and she knew you would not love her if she were ugly. She said you said so, and bade me tell you how dear your love was to her until the last.

"The nurse, MARTHA BLOOMGREN."

An hour afterwards a waiter found Charlie lying senseless on the floor beside his half-packed valise.

It was many weeks before he returned to his desolate home.

Then he found he could not live there.

The place seemed haunted.

His wife's dresses hung on the wall, and he seemed to hear the sound of her feet on the stairs, and hear the door stir, and a dozen times lifted his head and looked towards it, almost hoping she would come in.

In his place, Nellie would have gathered up small trifles he had touched, and kept them where she could weep over them; and she would have sought his grave, and sat beside it for long hours, but those pretty personal belongings were the very things he dreaded to see.

And her grave!

Ah, good Heaven, to look at it and think that it covered her.

He did not even ask where it was.

There had been a postscript to the letter, saying that all expenses were paid.

And the fact that she was dead blotted out all minor things—all save that terrible reminder of his idle speech.

That she thought of that in dying, was very woeful to him.

In a day or two he locked up the house, which he owned, and accepted the position of supercargo on an ocean vessel.

The sea, with its troubled waves, seemed better to him than solid land; to roam, his best relief.

Ah, we take the heart with us wherever we go.

It is not the land in which we live that troubles us, but that heart's woeful depths.

Nor can sea or sky give us comfort.

An unhappy man would be no less unhappy could he traverse space, and visit all the stars, only we do not think so when grief stings us to go somewhere.

To be at a distance from the scene of our great trial, is always the longing of the unhappy.

Charles did not say much—he never talked of his wife.

But when the vessel returned home, a sick man lay in one of its berths, tossing to and fro, and muttering again and again a woman's name—

"Nellie—Nellie!"

"He's been disappointed in love," said the stewardess, and cried over him, and thought that had she been a fair young lady, and he in love with her, he never should have been disappointed.

When they reached London, the delirium was over, but a pale skeleton was borne to the shore.

"Take him to Mrs. Boston's," the captain had said. "She's a kind woman, and will do what she can for him;" and poor Mrs. Boston, who had boarded more sea-captains and ship's officers generally than any one could count in a minute, opened her hospitable doors and gave the invalid her best bedroom.

"I don't mind sitting up at nights," she said; "and Nancy is a real good girl, she'll help."

Nancy was a shy young woman, with brown hair, short in the neck, and her features were deeply scarred.

She wore the plainest possible dress, and never seemed to be happy; but since she came to Mrs. Boston's door and asked for work, she had been invaluable.

"Nancy Smith is a treasure," said Mrs. Boston; "and I only wish I knew what she cried about so much; only I can't ask questions no more than if she was a lady."

Poor Nancy Smith.

She was no doubt nervous when she had stood beside the young man's pillow a moment.

She turned pale and gave a little cry.

He was in a sort of stupor, and did not hear her; but Mrs. Boston said—

"I hope you ain't overcome by the sight of sickness."

And she answered at once, in a frightened tone—

"Oh, no. I'm an excellent nurse. Do let me nurse him, Mrs. Boston."

And thus it came to pass that that night Nancy Smith sat up with the invalid.

He slept or was insensible; even the doctor was not quite sure which, or that he might ever open his eyes again.

And when Mrs. Boston had gone to bed, and all was still, that strange girl, Nancy, behaved most strangely.

She knelt down by the bed, and kissed the pallid hand that lay so gently upon the counterpane, and whispered over and over again—

"Oh, my darling! oh, my darling!"

Had Mrs. Boston seen her, she would surely have thought her mad.

Silence lay on the city, and the light of the late risen moon fell white through the crevices of the shutters, and the face of the drawn curtains.

A night lamp burnt in the room, and showed a face that watched intently, and a motionless one with closed eyes.

The clock on the mantel ticked slowly. At the appointed time medicine was to be given.

It was dropped between lips that never resisted, and lays always just a little apart.

"He is dying!" the watcher thought. "He is dying!"

But towards dawn a change came. The head turned upon the pillow—the lips parted.

"Nellie," whispered the voice, "Nellie, I want you."

Then the girl—this Nancy Smith—started, trembling, to her feet, and knelt beside him.

Her face was close to his when his eyes opened, and he looked at her.

"Nellie," he said, again, "Nellie!" then burst into a feeble, quivering laugh, and clasped her about the neck. "My darling!" he said.

And she cried out—

"Oh, Charles, do you know me, and love me?" and took his head upon her breast.

"I've been very sick, haven't I?" he said.

"Yes," said she, "very."

"I've had a dream, or been crazy," he said. "Which is it? I thought you were dead. Oh, Nellie, it was horrible. I thought I was at sea—I—why, how can it be a dream? No it was no dream. I'm crazy now. Yet this is Nellie.

"Nellie," he continued, "your hair is cut. your—your pretty little face has marks on it it never had before. Nellie, what does it all mean?"

She turned the light high, lifted it, and held it to her face.

"You see me plainly?" she said.

"Of course," said he. "Why, my dear little girl, I haven't dreamed that part of the letter. You've been ill, only you did not die. What does it all mean? Am I entirely crazy? Have I been?"

"And you love me?" she persisted. "You love me?"

"My precious little wife, how can I help it? It's part of me to love you," said he.

"Then it means that I have been crazy, not you," said she. "Oh, Charlie, you know you said you couldn't love me if I was ugly. So, when I found I should be so terribly marked and lose all my hair, I just wrote to you that I was dead. I meant to kill myself, but I hadn't courage, so I went away. I was a servant here when you were brought in, and I didn't think you'd know me."

"Then I have lived that year of misery," said Charlie. "Oh, Nellie, Nellie!"

Then he cried out almost angrily—

"What a fool I was. I made no inquiries. I did not even see the doctor, or discover where they had, as I supposed, buried you. I should have fathomed your scheme at once if I had. How could you, Nellie?"

"You said you wouldn't love me if I was ugly, and I couldn't bear it."

Mrs. Boston just then entering unexpectedly, explanations became highly necessary.

And the doctor said this excitement should have killed so very sick a man.

But it did not.

The reunited couple were soon able to return to their deserted home, and have another honeymoon.

And it is a fact, that though all the rest of the world knows very well that Nellie's face is not as pretty as it used to be, Charlie does not, for the beauty that love sees comes from the rosy light of the glasses that it wears, and so endures.

Charlie still believes that he loves Nellie because she is pretty.

She knows better now, and both are happy.

Her Punishment.

BY WILSON BENNOR.

"SO Julia Nottingham is engaged at last," said Mrs. Whitely. "Well, I'm sure I'm very glad to hear it."

But she spoke in a tone that belied her words. For, somehow, Julia Nottingham was not popular among the ladies of her acquaintance.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Sibthorpe, with a sagacious nod of the head. "I have it from the very best authority—her own aunt."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Whitely.

"A rich widower," said Mrs. Sibthorpe. "Fifty years old, and bald."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Whitely. "There's no fool like an old fool."

"Keeps his own carriage and horses, and has bought an elegant country seat."

"Julia will queen it now," said Mrs. Whitely, almost enviously.

Mrs. Whiteley, be it understood, was a widow not quite past the boundaries of youth, and not at all averse to a second marriage with some eligible *parti*.

"And how about Clarence Egerton?"

"Oh, she's thrown him over, of course," said Mrs. Sibthorpe. "That was nothing but a flirtation."

"Some people have all the luck," sighed Mrs. Whiteley.

And while her good fortune was the subject of popular gossip, Miss Nottingham herself sat in her own room at home, complacently surveying the set of solitaire pearls, embedded in blue velvet, and the magnificent dead gold bracelets, which had just arrived with Mr. Philpotts' card attached.

"How superb!" said Mrs. Nottingham, a brisk little woman, with grey curls and a suspiciously unchanging bloom on each cheek.

"Oh, yes," said Julia, indifferently. "But I wish his name was anything but Philpotts."

"Shakspeare says 'What's in a name?'" archly rejoined the mother.

"Very likely," said Miss Nottingham, with a toss of the head; "but you see Shakspeare wasn't a young lady just about to be married.

And she thought regretfully, notwithstanding her callous coquette-heart, of poor Clarence Egerton, who had magnificent curls, and a profile like Adonis.

But she went smilingly down to meet her middle-aged *fiance* that afternoon.

"My own Julia!" said Mr. Philpotts, beamingly.

"Dear Hiram!" sweetly responded Julia, with a little swallow of the unromantic Christian name in her throat.

"I have brought you a bouquet for Mrs. Poddington's reception to-night," said Mr. Philpotts, producing a miracle of the florist's art, wrapped in as many silver papers as a mummy.

"How kind of you, love," said Miss Nottingham.

"I will call for you in the carriage at nine precisely," added Philpotts.

"I'm sure it's very considerate, dear, smiled Julia.

"And here," bringing out of his pocket a heavy gold necklace, from which hung a diamond-set locket, "is a trifle which I hope you will oblige me by wearing to-night.

Julia's eyes sparkled.

She was a miser at heart, and gold and diamonds were exceedingly beautiful in her eyes.

It was worth while, she reflected, to marry a man old enough to be her father, for the sake of treasures such as these.

But when the carriage came that evening to convey her to Mrs. Poddington's ball, it was empty, and the servant handed her a note from Mr. Philpotts.

He had an attack of his old enemy, the rheumatism, he wrote, and found himself most reluctantly compelled to remain at home.

"All the better," said Miss Julia to herself, with a last glance at the mirror before she wrapped the white cashmere opera cloak about her shoulders, and tripped lightly down stairs.

"I can have a charming time with poor dear Clarence, who is never at a loss for something to say, and waltzes beautifully."

Miss Nottingham was not displeased with her own appearance, in silver-green silk, half-hidden by clouds of snowy tulle, and a set of emeralds, which had been Mr. Philpotts gift.

"Yes," said she, with a complacent little nod, as her mother complimented her on her becoming dress, "it's all well enough. But just wait until I come out in black velvet and diamonds as a matron."

Miss Nottingham enjoyed herself that evening.

She waltzed to her heart's content, flirted enough for three, and finally disappeared in the green recesses of the conservatory with the straight-nosed Clarence Egerson.

The Poddingtons had more money than they knew what to do with, and they had expended a goodly portion of it in the decoration of the great arched palace of plate glass which opened out of the supper-room.

Acacias brushed the roof, passion vines swung their purple cups on every side, and a little grove of palms and oleanders in the centre enclosed a sparkling fountain of cool spray, which tinkled down among mossy rocks, and into clusters of pale green ferns, like a forest waterfall.

Just within this enchanted nook, a rustic seat afforded an excellent corner for flirtation, and of course Miss Julia Nottingham and her rejected swain found their way to it.

"Now, don't be ridiculous, Clarence," said Julia. "Let go my hand."

"But you shall answer me first," persisted Clarence. "You shall tell me whether you really love this old money-making machine you're going to marry."

"Of course I don't love him!"

"And you do love me?"

"Well, yes, I do—if that will be any satisfaction to you."

"Then, Julia it is me you should wed!" cried out the young man.

"Now, you are getting silly again," said Julia, imperiously withdrawing the hand which Mr. Egerton had contrived to keep captive until then. "When you know very well that your entire income would hardly keep me in gloves and slippers!"

"Julia!"

"It's as well to be honest about it," said Julia.

"I do like you the best—and I shall appoint you my chevalier in chief when I am married. To carry my fans and bouquets, you know, and take me out to morning concerts and matinees when my husband is at the bank.

"But old Philpotts is rich—and that's why I intend to marry him. Of course I don't love him—who could be expected to love a bald-headed old man like that? But I dare say I shall make a very good sort of

wife; and he can't live forever, you know, so when I'm a rich widow, I mean to suit myself."

"Don't, I beg of you, wait for that," cried out a hoarse voice, half choked with rage.

And to Miss Nottingham's great dismay and surprise, Mr. Philpotts himself tumbled into the fountain-sparkling nook.

"I'm a bald-headed old man, am I"—I'm a mere money-making machine? Miss Nottingham, I couldn't have credited this if I hadn't heard it with my own ears. Perhaps you may one day be a rich widow, Miss Nottingham, but you won't be mine.

"I beg to release you from your engagement."

And Mr. Philpotts stalked out of the fairy bower.

Miss Nottingham sat looking after him, with clasped hands, and a face as pale as ashes.

Clarence Egerton pulled hard at his moustache.

"Upon my word," said he, secretly enjoying the discomfiture of the young lady, who had so coolly thrown him over but a few weeks since, "this is what one would call a pretty kettle of fish.

"The old chap must have overheard every word."

It was quite true.

Mr. Philpotts, finding himself better as the hour for the reception approached, had resolved to give Miss Nottingham an agreeable surprise.

He dressed himself, and came to Mrs. Poddington's, a little late, but yet in tolerably good time.

Hearing from some one that Miss Nottingham had gone into the conservatory, he innocently followed her thither, and heard what the reader already knows.

Miss Nottingham's wedding dress was never worn, and she is still on the look-out for a successor to the "rich old man" that she did not marry.

The Redeemed Promise.

BY WILSON BENNON.

IT'S all true, and it's about myself; and perhaps, it won't be interesting to anyone else, but here goes.

Grandfather was a sailor, went down with the "White Warp," all hands and her cargo.

Father was a sailor.

The last voyage he made, was as first mate, in the "Polly."

Says mother to him as he kissed her good-bye on the wharf—

"I shall never see you again, Jack; I know I never shall."

"Lord love you, Kitty," says he, "you'll see me until you are tired of me; I don't mean to go down this voyage. It's a short one, and a good season. What makes you so blue?"

"I don't know, Jack," says she, and falls a-crying.

And he puts her into her mother's arms, and went.

He had to go, you know.

Time, tide, and the captain wait for no man.

Well, he wasn't drowned.

He hadn't even a storm—fair weather the whole voyage through; and he came back six months from that day with a pocketful of money, and a new silk dress, and a lot of shells and gimcracks, and a parrot, and what not for his wife.

He lived at Fairweather, and the sea breeze followed him to his door.

It was a little cottage, painted white, with green shutters; and it was getting dusk, and a candle burnt inside, and the red light fell through the white curtains; and he heard a woman's voice singing that low, sleepy kind of song they sing to babies, and the regular "creak, creak" of a rocking-chair keeping time to it.

"Kitty," cried he, bursting in.

But no Kitty was there; only her mother, dressed in black, sat before the fire, rocking a little baby.

He stood still, with his blood turning to ice in his veins.

"Mother," said he.

The old woman turned her head.

"Oh, Jack, Jack," she cried, and the great tears rolled down her cheeks.

Then without another word, father knew that his wife was dead.

"Three months ago," the grandmother said, not waiting to be questioned, and her last words were—"Tell him to love baby for my sake."

Baby was I.

He took no notice of me then, father did not, but just went away and hid himself somewhere; but later on, in the middle of the night, grannie saw him steal in and kneel down by my cradle.

After that he couldn't bear me out of his sight.

Grannie died when I was five years old, and then I began to go to sea with him.

He was a captain by that time, and could have his own way; and I suppose we should have gone down together with the "Penelope," if it hadn't been that I had the measles when he set sail.

His going off without me nearly broke my heart; and when the news came, that is always coming to sailors' friends, I honestly wished, young as I was, that I had been with him.

Without my father the world was simply empty.

But grief don't kill people.

I lived and got over it, as much as people ever get over things.

Every sorrow and every joy is twisted into your life, to my fancy, and stays there until the end, though you may think it's all over and done with.

But at seventeen I had gone through the school my guardian put me at, and when my choice of a calling was put to me, I said "the sea."

"It is a dangerous trade, lad," said the old man.

"Your father's will left your choice free, but the sea has been fatal to those of your name."

"We must die some day," said I, "and give me the sea for a burial place instead of the graveyard."

I loved the sea.

I'd been pining for it ever since they cooped me up in school.

Love for the sea is born in some people, as love of liquor is in others.

Sometimes they go together, I'm sorry to say, though I don't plead guilty to that sort of thing myself.

I could take my glass of grog or leave it without trouble.

You should see me now, brown, tanned with wind and sun, hoarse-voiced and fat.

Seafaring men always thicken up after forty.

You wouldn't know me, if you could see me as I looked then.

I had a waist like a girl's, and a white skin and red cheeks.

I had long eye-lashes, and soft hands, and I know they called me pretty.

I hated my own looks.

I wanted to be more of a man—big and burly, as I remembered father—and I said to myself, as I looked in the glass—

"Books and slate pencils have made a lass of me."

All that has rubbed off.

I needn't have fretted.

Well, Captain Petrel's name was well known along the coast, and Captain Petrel had been too much of a friend to others not to have made friends for his son.

So they found me a better berth than most youngsters could have got, and I stood with my things all packed in my new chest, ready to shake hands and say good-bye to my guardian and his wife, and their little granddaughter.

The old lady cried, and the old gentleman blessed me, and little Rosebud, as they called her, held up her arms to me.

I lifted her to my shoulder.

She was just six years old, and as pretty as a fairy.

"Don't go away, Paul," said she.

"No help for it now, Rosebud," says I; "but just wait until I come back, and you shall be my little wife."

"Don't talk such nonsense to the child," said her grandmother.

"It's a promise, isn't it?" said I.

"Yes," said she.

"I'll be your little wife, Paul, when you come back."

Then I kissed her again, and set her down.

Dear little soul, I didn't know how much I thought of her before, and then I was off, and in an hour or two more I had left land behind me, and had my heart's content, for I was a sailor.

I came back to see the old folks whenever I could; but I didn't see Rosebud.

Her mother and father had taken her to E——, and so I forgot my little wife after awhile.

Then the old people died, and I never knew whether she grew up to be a handsome woman, or went to Heaven the pretty child that she was; but I had a way of saying "I'm engaged," when anybody bantered me about being a bachelor.

For time went on and I did not marry.

I say no woman who seemed better to me than my ship was.

I liked them all, but not as you may say, in particular, and I was thirty years old when I made my first voyage in my own ship, the "Water Witch."

Ah, but she was a beauty. I'll owe I felt proud of her.

No father ever loved a daughter more.

She was a passenger ship; and as I sat looking down it, I felt that I had something to take airs about, if that sort of thing was not contemptible.

Down on my right hand sat an old gentleman with white hair, his wife and his son; on the other sat a young lady who was taking the voyage alone.

I noticed these more than I did the rest of the folks, somehow, and they seemed to take a good deal of notice of me, and of each other.

After dinner, as I was walking on the deck, the young man came and asked me for an introduction to the young lady.

I got her permission first, and then obliged him.

He seemed to me to be particularly struck with her.

Indeed, after a while I knew he was deep sea in love.

At first it seemed all very well—two young people, both handsome, both in a good position in society—a most suitable thing, indeed; but, after a little, after some talk with the girl myself, and some bright glances and sweet smiles from her, I didn't like the idea half so well as I did at first.

Why, I didn't hardly know then, but soon I made a discovery.

"You ninny-hammer," say I, "you lubber, you've fallen in love with her yourself."

And so I had; there was no denying it.

"Then," says I, "avast there. Look to your lines; you're in shallow water. You will be on the shoals yet, and all for a pretty face and a girl's voice."

But preaching never does very much good.

I couldn't crush the fancy out of my heart, and I saw too much of her for my peace of mind.

Who can give up happy moments because they must lead to bitter ones?

I couldn't.

I tried, but I couldn't.

I haunted the places she walked in as much as I could without neglecting my duty.

And I kept thinking, if it wasn't for that young shaver, perhaps she'd like me.

But there was that young shaver, you see, and he made the most of himself.

Miss Rathburn—that was her name, and how often I heard it—it was "Miss Rathburn, come and breathe the fresh breeze;" and Miss Rathburn this and Miss Rathburn that, from his lips all the while, and to me she was getting to be my little darling and my little love, and all without a word of anything but mere politeness passing between us.

Sometimes when I saw how slim my chance was, and how good his was, I felt like heaving myself over the ship's side.

We were nearing port.

Next day we should see land.

It was a bright moonlight night, and I'd been thinking how delightful it would be to sit with her a little while; but I had a thousand things to do, and my gentleman passenger hadn't.

So there he was when eight bells struck, looking down into the water with his head close to hers.

The air was very clear, and though I was no eavesdropper, I could hear every word they said, standing where I'd taken my place just to look at her. Not to listen, as I'm a gentleman.

But when I'd heard the first word, I could not help listening to the rest.

"Oh, I'm engaged," said she.

That was the first word—"I'm engaged.

"I wonder whether you could jest with a fellow at such a time?" said he.

"No, I hope not," said Miss Rathburn; "but I hope you are not in earnest.

"We have known each other such a little while.

"It's an old joke that slipped from my lips.

"When I was a little child, almost a baby, I knew a pretty young sailor who went away to sea.

"All I remember of him is that he had beautiful eyes, and that his name was Paul.

"He made me promise to be his little wife, and I promised; so they say at home that I'm waiting for him yet—because—because I never like any one more than a friend."

"But you might," said he.

"But I don't," said she.

"And I always hope no friend will ever ask me to be any more to him, for I should only say 'no.'"

"Are you sure?" said he.

"Very, very sure," said she; "positive, Mr. Warburton."

And then he walked away, and I felt sorry for the fellow—sorrier than I ever thought I should feel for him.

And I felt glad too—glad for myself—for I knew now that this was little Rosebud, who had promised to be my wife when I came back, and who, being my old guardian's daughter's child, had not the same name as her grandfather.

I waited just a little while, and then crossed the deck to where she was still leaning over the side.

"Miss Rathburn," said I, "I've just remembered you.

"Do you remember me, when you were staying at your grandfather's house, years ago, only a child of six, and rather liked a good-for-nothing sailor boy named Paul? I'm Paul—Paul Petrel."

She turned toward me with such a smile and gave me both her hands.

"Oh, I'm so glad," said she.

"Take care," said I.

"You promised to marry me when I came back, and I'm going to claim the promise."

That made her rosier, but not a bit sorrier, as far as I could see; and as for what else I said, and what she answered, you can guess, when I tell you that she married me before a twelve-month was over.

Some of the New York papers are advertising the wearing of silk robes by the judges when sitting on the bench—evidently forgetting that silk cannot be satin.

Given up by Physicians.

A patient residing at Binghamton, N. Y., after using Compound Oxygen for two years, gives the gratifying result:

"For two years I could not stand on my feet but for five minutes at a time, or talk as many minutes; but now I can walk four or five miles and do business all day; and I owe my recovery to health to the persistent use of Compound Oxygen, for I used it about two years, gaining a little all the time. Nearly all the physicians who attended me gave me up, and some said they could number my days."

Our "Treatise on Compound Oxygen," containing a history of the discovery and mode of action of this remarkable curative agent, and a large record of surprising cures in Consumption, Catarrh, Neuralgia, Bronchitis, Asthma, etc., and a wide range of chronic diseases, will be sent free. Address Drs. STARKEY & PALEN, 1109 and 1111 Girard St., Philada.

The Gambler's Wife.

BY M. W. PAXTON.

"WHAT new beauty have we here, Albert?" I asked, taking a small colored picture from among the mass of papers that covered the table and floor of the library.

"Who is she? The eyes affect me strangely with their wild frightened look. There is a reign of terror in them equal to the one her ancestors passed through. I almost see the shadow of the guillotine in their velvety depths.

"Let me see.

"Ah, my little sister, may you never know so hard a fate as this poor girl encountered and succumbed to. No, she is not French—a Russian—but married to a Frenchman."

And Albert took the picture from my hand and placed it on a small easel above his desk.

"I will tell you about her, Alice, if you have an hour.

"It was while Jack Holmes was with me last June, and when we left Versailles for Paris, that I first saw Madame Dupont—though I think the name an assumed one.

"We had to run to prevent being left, I remember; and Holmes, out of humor because of it, plunged his face into his book and left me to my own resources.

"As soon as I was comfortably settled, I, as usual, began scrutinizing my traveling companions, and to try and imagine who and what they were.

"There were four besides ourselves in the railway-carriage—one a quiet middle-aged Englishman, who was soon asleep in his corner.

"The two who sat next were evidently husband and wife, though he paid her none of the attention and politeness usually accorded in public, even if dispensed with privately.

"He was a pale quiet man of twenty-five, perhaps, richly but quietly dressed, and seemingly taking no notice of any one around him.

"The wife, too, was pale, and much as she looks there in that picture.

"Her dress, though simple, was perfect, and evidently the production of some first-rate artiste.

"Her whole style proclaimed her at once to belong to the highest order of society.

"She seemed to be suffering, and frequently put her hand to her forehead, and I observed upon the delicately-formed ungloved hand a costly diamond ring.

"It was a beauty; and I enjoyed looking at the flashing gems as she caressed a small English dog that often looked up at her with affectionate recognition.

"The other passenger I could not make out at all.

"He was elderly, commonly dressed, and with scanty grey hair and heavy whiskers.

"His piercing black eyes were frequently placed on the silent young married couple, and then again he seemed as utterly oblivious of them as they of him.

"What was his nationality?

"Was he with them, or a stranger like myself?

"I could not tell.

"And the more I looked, the more uncertain I became.

"I thought, too, there seemed an effort at disguise.

"He kept his face averted as much as he could, consistent with his watchfulness of the quiet young husband, whom he eyed at times so very persistently.

"Arrived at our destination, we dined, and in the evening went to a private gambling-house.

"I was greatly surprised, on entering, to see my elderly traveling companion seated at the table, his eyes and manners keen as ever, and deep in a game of rouge et noir.

"A gleam of satisfaction shone over his face as the door opened and our other traveling acquaintance from Versailles—the quiet careless husband—entered and sat down to play.

"He lost from the first deal.

"Rouleau after rouleau was swept from the table by his watchful old opponent; but still he played on.

"When he left the room his last napoleon was gone.

"After supping at a coffee-house, I went back to my room at the hotel, but from some cause could not sleep.

"The heat was oppressive and my room small; besides, the game I had been watching had excited me strangely, and I only fell into a troubled sleep near morning.

"I was awakened about daylight by voices in the adjoining room—those of a man and a woman, evidently

"The man's voice was low and pleading, and the woman seemed to be crying.

"I could hear enough to understand that she was refusing him some request, for his tones became loud and threatening, and at last I heard him say:

"'If you refuse me, you seal my ruin and your own. I have no more gold, and I must have the diamonds to retrieve myself.'

"Hysterical sobs were the only answer he received, and he continued:

"'Something tells me I shall win tonight, and I must have the ring.'

"'Never, Charles! I cannot give it up. It is all I have left. It was my mother's, and I will not let it leave me.'

"The man's voice was so choked with passion that his words were inarticulate;

but, with a burst of wild anger, he left, slamming the door after him.

"I saw neither of my gambling acquaintances that day, and the night found me again in Monsieur Carlo's rooms.

"The old man was again on hand—not satisfied, I thought, with his winnings of the night before—and again I saw a gleam of satisfaction cross his face as his victim of the previous evening came in and got ready to play.

"'Make your game—the game is made up!' cried the dealer, and was about to deal the cards, when the young man who had just entered called out in a loud voice—

"'Fifty napoleons upon the red!'

"Seeing he placed no money upon the table, the croupier paused a moment, then said—

"'Sir, you must stake the money.'

"The gambler started, and turned paler than ever; a long shuddering sigh broke from him as he felt first in one pocket, then in another, and finally grasped his hat and fled from the room.

"The playing went on for a while longer, and then, one by one, they went out, leaving only the attendants, the old keen-eyed gambler, and myself present.

"Something—an undefinable feeling of interest in the unhappy young man who had left the house in such despair a short time before—held me there. I must see if he returns.

"Suddenly the door opened, and he ran in, as if fleeing for his life.

"I shall never forget that sight, Alice.

"His face was ghastly, his dress disordered, and he trembled as though with ague.

"As he rushed up to the table, in the strong glare of the lights, I saw great drops of perspiration standing on his brow.

"He thrust his hand in his pocket and tossed a ring down before his opponent.

"'There! it is worth four hundred. Now, cover my stakes!' he cried.

"I instantly recognized the beautiful diamond as the one his wife had worn.

"'Red! I bet on the red!' again shouted the young man.

"And in a moment the croupier called—

"'Black wins!' and the ring was no longer his.

"With a wild cry, the wretched loser fled from the house, and, completely unmanned by what I had seen, I returned to my hotel, hoping the young man would soon follow me.

"I found them all—travelers, proprietor, and servants—wild with excitement over the beautiful Russian lady.

"An hour before, her maid had gone to her room, and found her with a terrible wound in her head, and dead.

"The husband had been in and left some few moments before.

"I went up to her apartment, and to the bed where she lay.

"Her exquisite face was fairer than in life, for it had lost the unhappy look, and seemed at peace.

"As I turned to leave the room, I saw this picture among a heap of things turned out of a man's traveling-case, and appropriated it.

"Probably the husband had tossed it there in his search for some valuables to risk at the gaming-table.

"The miserable man took his life before he was apprehended for his crime, and the old gambler, who, first in one disguise, then in another, had followed the easily duped victim from city to city, and won many thousands from him, left Paris before the husband and wife were carried to their last resting-place in the beautiful burying-ground where his forefathers slept."

Myths About Stone.—According to one theory it was a precious stone in Paradise that fell to the earth at Adam's fall, and was then lost in the slime of the deluge that it was reserved by the angel Gabriel. It was originally a jacinth of such extreme whiteness that it dazzled people's eyes at the distance even of four days' journey, and only gradually became blackened now in from shame and sorrow for the sins of the world. But according to the latter opinion it was not merely a jacinth of Paradise, but the actual guardian angel, who, having been sent to watch over Adam therein, was at his fall, and as a punishment for not having given vigilantly executed his trust, changed into a stone, and driven from Paradise, but destined to resume his angelic form when the days of the world are all numbered and finished. Both Germany and France still bear vestiges of the same capability of thought. In the former you may still be shown upon a certain heath a large stone, embodying a bridal pair and their followers, who were thus transformed because the musicians who attended them continued to play festive airs, though a thunder-storm broke over them as they were driving over the heath. You may still learn a lesson, too, from the petrified form of a girl who, when once petrified flax on a Sunday, swore she would be turned into stone sooner than go home; or, from two great stones, which are really boys, so transfixed for quarreling over so sacred a thing as a piece of bread, the gift of God to man.

Enjoy your own life without comparing it with that of another.

New remedies, and old ones under new names, are being constantly introduced to the public, but Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup still takes the lead for the cure of Coughs, Colds, etc. Price, 25 cents.

My Aunt's Choice.

BY E. LINWOOD SMITH.

"I TELL you, Fanny Shawmut, you were made for each other."

"And I tell you, aunt, I would sooner die than marry him."

"You are a fool, Fanny. You are as headstrong and self-willed as your father was before you."

"Please leave my relations entirely out of the discussion. I am my own mistress, twenty-one years old, and free to refuse the emperor if I choose. And I tell you, aunt, once more, that I will not stay here to meet Earle Rochefort. So there."

And Fanny Shawmut left the room, and shut the door behind her in a way which showed that she had a temper.

Hildred Ames put her smelling salts to her nose.

Such contumacy in Fanny she was sorely tried with.

If she had dreamed that ever the girl would have developed so much, she would have declined to become her guardian, even to please her dying brother.

A very few words will explain how matters stood.

Earle Rochefort was a young man of twenty-eight or thirty, and a favorite with the good lady.

According to her idea, there was not another man in the world worth naming beside him.

His father had been Hildred's first love, but treachery on the part of somebody or other, it does not matter whom, had separated them; and he had found another woman, and Hildred had found another man.

But when Earle's father died, an explanation had taken place, and Hildred had promised to love the son for the sake of the father.

And indeed, she found it not very difficult to love Earle for his own sake, for he was gentle and affectionate, and won the regard of all with whom he came in contact.

He did not marry, though a great many beautiful young girls would gladly have accepted him, and so it happened at eight-and-twenty he was still a bachelor; and about that time Hildred's brother John died in Madeira, and left his daughter, Fanny, to her aunt's care.

Fanny, pretty, spoiled, an heiress in her own right, and accustomed always to troops of servants to order about, did not readily fall into the groove her aunt had prepared for her.

She had made up her mind that she would not love and marry thus Earle Rochefort, of whom she had heard so much.

As yet, she had not met him.

He was absent in California, where he owned some mines, and had been there nearly half a year perfecting some arrangements for their improved working.

But he was expected home daily, and Hildred was continually agitating the subject nearest her heart.

She had likewise written to Earle, over and over again, glowing descriptions of Fanny, and had dwelt largely upon her favorite plan of a union between her two children, as she called Earle and Fanny.

Young Rochefort, with all a man's aversion to having a wife picked out for him, began also to fairly hate the name of Fanny, and to feel very much averse to meeting the paragon.

In fact, so strong did this feeling become that he decided not to go to Elmwood, Hildred's town, but to spend the winter in D——, a place some hundred and forty miles distant.

He could make "business" and excuse; for, in addition to his other advantages, Rochefort was wealthy, and a man of property is always supposed to have plenty of business on hand.

So he wrote to Mrs Ames to that effect, promising to run down and see her the very first opportunity.

Fanny, meanwhile, had packed a few dresses, and as little finery as it is possible for a young lady to exist with, into a couple of trunks, and in spite of Hildred's remonstrances, had departed to undertake a long visit to her cousin Bentley's family in D——.

The very day Fanny's departure, Mrs. Ames received Earle's letter.

"Glorious!" she cried; "things couldn't have happened more to my liking. I'll write to cousin Martha this very day, and get her on my side, and so, Miss Fanny, we shall see you Mrs Earle Rochefort yet, in spite of yourself. For I know he will fall in love with you, if he meets you, and I don't believe you can help falling in love with him."

The letter to cousin Martha was written and dispatched, and Hildred felt willing to await the course of events.

She felt moderately sure that all would be just as she wished it.

Fanny looked very pretty in her dark blue traveling suit, and her coquettish round hat, with its white feather, as she began her journey to D——.

More than one gentleman looked wistfully at the unoccupied seat beside her, but she spread out her skirts in a way that lady travellers have, and put her muff on the cushions, and none of them were bold enough to ask her if the seat were engaged.

Presently a young man in a heavy traveling cloak passed beside her, and asked the question she had been expecting somebody would be impertinent to ask.

She had a great mind to tell him she preferred sitting alone, but he had taken up the muff and made himself comfortable before she had quite made up her mind to be so impolite.

Then she looked at him, and was obliged to confess to herself that she had never seen a finer face.

Its clear blue eyes, and blonde hair and moustache just suited Fanny's taste, for her own hair and eyes were black, and her lips and cheeks glowing, and, of course, she liked a blonde man best—indeed, how could she help it?

And he had such a grave sweet voice, and he was so careful not to sit down on her flounces.

They became very social, and talked of a great many things.

They vowed that they both liked the same authors, and this, of itself, is a wonderful strong bond of sympathy.

By-and-bye they wandered to religion, and then to politics, and on both subjects their opinions agreed.

After that it was all plain sailing.

A furious snow storm set in, for it was the month of January, and the wind blew a gale.

But our young friends were so much occupied in getting acquainted that snow storms were of no account whatever.

After awhile it began to be very cold, and to make things more uncomfortable, the locomotive floundered through the fast increasing drift in a way which showed the passengers that ere long snow would assert its power over steam.

Night was coming on, too, for it was in the month of January, and the train was just entering a twenty-mile stretch, and there were not a half-a-dozen dwellings from one end of this desolate waste to the other.

Fanny began to feel very nervous.

She wondered whatever she should have done without this gentleman had occupied the seat with her, and who wrapped his travelling shawl round her so carefully.

Fanny thought that if only that Mr. Earle Rochefort, of whom Hildred prated so much, had been like this interesting stranger, how easily she could have married him, and made Hildred happy.

The storm increased, the drifts became more and more formidable, and at last the engine gave a plunge forward, which shook everybody out of their seats, and demoralized things generally.

They were off the line, and no more progress could be made.

Fanny cried, and clung to the stranger, who did not appear sorry that the accident had happened.

He comforted the young girl, and drew her down on his shoulder to finish her crying, and took off her hat so that it would not be crushed, and wound her soft white "cloud" over her curls and braids in such a delicate and skilful way.

"Ah, well!

Fanny had lost her heart to him before the crash happened, and now she was completely subjected.

After all, it was a very delightful night. Fanny dozed a little, and her stranger sat beside her and kept her wrapped up.

The other men swore over the vile situation they were in, and the women fretted, but none of this disturbed Fanny Shawmut.

In the morning aid came; troops of men with shovels and basks——.

But everything bright must have an end, and in due time the train was put on the line and D——was reached.

The stranger put Fanny in a cab, and went with her to cousin Bentley's and asked permission to call on her, and so they parted.

He hadn't thought to ask her name, neither had she thought to ask his.

The next day, Martha received Hildred's letter, and that evening, when Fanny's stranger called, oddly enough, Martha herself opened the door for him and took his card.

Then she showed him into the parlor, and followed him in, and shut the door behind her, and stayed there talking with him for fully twenty minutes, before she called Fanny.

The stranger was introduced as Mr. Fort which Fanny thought a very singular name.

But then after all, "what's in a name?"

Of course they had very delightful evening, which was but the beginning of a series of delightful evenings.

Mr. Fort's heart held out just a fortnight, and then he told his love in words too glowing for the cold point of our cynical pen to write, and the two young people did a very desperate thing—they engaged themselves, and set the wedding day just one month ahead.

Fanny wrote her aunt a very graphic account of the whole affair, dwelling on Mr. Fort's kindness and devotion during the storm, and ending with saying that her lover was so far in advance of that odious Earle Rochefort in all the virtues and graces, that she was sure Aunt Hildred would be delighted that her disobedient but ever loving niece did not stay at home and marry that bear.

When Aunt Hildred read the letter, she laughed till the tears came and dimmed her spectacles, and she hugged the cat, and shook hands with Betty the cook, and then proved herself a true woman, and in her right mind, by overturning her wardrobe to see if she had a dress suitable to wear at the wedding.

Fanny came back to Elmwood just a week previous to this important event, and Mrs. Ames' house was turned upside down with the grand preparations.

Fanny declared she hoped that abominable Rochefort wouldn't put in an appearance at the wedding, for she knew she couldn't be decent when he was by; and thereat Hildred would good naturedly remonstrate with her daughter that Fanny began to look serious, for she was certainly afraid her aunt's brain was softening.

So many brains were softening nowadays!

The wedding dress was splendid, and Fanny looked like an angel.

Just about five minutes before the time set for the performance of the ceremony the bridegroom was announced.

But what was Fanny's amazement to see Hildred rush up to him, throw her arms around his neck, and call him her "Dear Earle," and tell him how glad she was to see him back?

And then Hildred led him to the bride, and making a low obeisance, went through with the ceremony of an introduction.

"Miss Fanny Shawmut, allow me to have the pleasure of presenting to you Mr. Earle Rochefort, to whom you are about to be married."

Fanny's eyes blazed, and her little red mouth unclosed to say something spiteful, but Earle stopped it with a kiss, which is always an excellent way to stop a woman from scolding.

The wedding came just as though nothing had happened, though everybody remarked that Fanny had a very high color for a bride.

Brides should always be pale, you know.

It proved a very happy union, though Fanny is wont to declare to Hildred that she never would have married that Earle Rochefort if it had not been that she could not bear the thought of not wearing that "lovely dress."

A Batchelor's Lament.—I do wish somebody would tell me how to get a wife? For the last ten years I've been continually proposing, at all sorts of times, in all sorts of places, to all sorts of girls, and in all sorts of positions.

I have knelt in the clear moonlight, while the soft zephyrs of June fanned my heated brow, and with my hands on my heart made the most passionate appeal romantic maiden could desire.

I have proposed in the giddy mazes of the waltz.

I have besought a fair girl to be mine while skating, reminding her, at the time, that the path of life was far too slippery to be trodden alone.

I have popped the question behind the door, on the stairs, and, in fact, everywhere I could, the last time on the shore, where I begged the object of my affections to let us breast the waves together.

But it's of no earthly use.

No one will have me except an old maid; and I'm not partial to old maids; though, goodness knows, I want a wife almost badly enough to take one.

I've hardly a button on any of my shirts, or other undergarments, and am consequently obliged to fasten them with pins.

My toes are poking out of my socks, and my linen is out of repair, while to crown all, I, who am a great lover of cleanliness, am forced to sit in a horribly dusty room.

I possess enough money to keep a wife comfortably; I'm tall, and have a splendid moustache; and what more could a girl ask?

[illegible] I receive a favorable answer to this appeal, I shall speedily migrate to some more genial climate, where cottages are at least superfluous, and washerwomen unknown. B.

Two Widows.—The Paris *Figaro* the other day, asked this question—"Given two widows, of the same age, same rank, same disposition, one of whom had a good husband, the other a bad one, would both desire to re-marry, which would marry first?" Several answers were received. One began by saying that all women desired to marry again. But it was supposable that a woman would marry first, for she of the bad husband would want to get a better one, and she of the good husband because she was pleased with married life. Another lady remarked that there was no doubt about the matter; she who had had the bad husband would be first happy in her declaration of love, and would say, "Will you have me?" while the other would wait to be asked. "She who had a good husband," said the lady, "would be the last to marry again. Why? Because she would regret him sooner."

National Music.—It would lead to an interesting as well as useful speculation, to inquire how this has arisen that different nations have become wedded with the customs of different nations. The harp may be said to belong to Ireland, the bagpipe to Scotland, the flute to Germany, the violin to Italy, and the guitar to Spain. The high-born Spanish maiden still delights in this harmonious instrument; the soldier takes it with him on his march and into the camp; the muleteer cheers his way over the mountains with its sound; the carriers take it with them in their covered wagons; the barber has one hung up in his shop, with which he amuses himself while waiting for a customer; through every class from the highest to the lowest, it is preserved with affectionate feelings; it is the symbol of love, the consoler of care, and equally suited to the movements of the fandango, and the bolero, as to the sweetness of Spanish song.

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Our Young Folks.

THE THRUSH'S FRIEND.

BY PIPKIN.

"WHATEVER is that under the bushes?"

It was Daisy who spoke, and her little sister Ruth, stooping down, tenderly lifted from the damp ground a half-fledged bird, whose brown stiff feathers she smoothed with dainty touches.

Daisy peeped up through the fir and laurels to find the nest from which the poor bird must have fallen.

There it was, but hopelessly out of reach.

"We must ask Roger: he is so tall, and can easily put it back," they said.

But old Roger the gardener shook his head.

"'Tis no manner of use; likely enough the old birds have some sort of spite against the little 'un.

"I'll put it in the nest to please you, but it won't be long before you find it on the ground again."

Roger was right.

The next morning there lay the poor thrush under the bushes, looking so pitiful and helpless that Ruth, who was very tender-hearted, sat down on the ground to stroke and cry over it.

Roger was summoned again.

He was the counsellor of the children in many of their difficulties.

There lay the little brown bunch on Ruth's frock.

"You'll never rear it," he said.

"But, Roger, dear, we will take such care of it," pleaded Daisy.

"We like the poor thrush so much; we intend to feed it our own selves with egg and bread-crumbs; do please say it will live."

"Because, you see, Roger, we want it to love us very much, and to sing to us," added Ruth.

"Please yourselves," answered the old gardener in his gruff voice, "you'll only kill it with kindness, and my advice is, let the poor thing be put out of its misery at once.

"But there, you always do have your way, Miss Daisy, and the old dove-cage in the tool-house is empty," saying which, Roger stooped to wheel away his barrow of turf.

The two children raced across the grass to the tool-house, and soon the poor thrush, looking very wretched, was laid on a handful of cut grass at the bottom of the large wicker cage.

"I wonder why it gapes so?" said Ruth, watching the opening and shutting of the feeble yellow bill.

"It lets all the nice bread-crumbs drop out as fast as I put them in its beak," complained Daisy.

But Miss Janes, the governess, was ringing the schoolroom bell from the window, and the unfed thrush must be left.

"I wish we could sit by it all the afternoon," said the little girls, "it will be so lonely, poor thing."

When bedtime came they were still more unwilling to leave their new pet.

"Susan would not let us have the cage in the nursery, I am afraid," said Daisy.

"Suppose we set it under the fir-tree, and then, as soon as ever it sings at all we can look out of our window and see it."

Very early did the two children wake, but they were not the first to see the rays of the sun on the grass of the spring morning.

Roger, it seems, was digging up his early potatoes, for one of the house-maids was sorting, over the potatoes stood not only Roger, but the house-steward, and a little crowd of children in their pinafores, but all around the cage was quiet, for it was under the fir-trees, among the dewy grass, and about the close-cropped turf.

"If we could only get the window open just a little," whispered Daisy, "we could chirp to the poor thrush, and it would know we were here."

But Ruth caught her sister's hand as she lifted it.

"Hush!" she said; "look there, Daisy."

For the thrush was moving to the side of the cage, his yellow bill very wide open.

They could see this, but they could also see something more.

On a bough of the fir-tree just above the cage sat a robin, his throat and pretty red breast swelling and heaving with the joyousness of his morning song.

Suddenly he ceased; perhaps the singer heard some sound below, which told that there was another bird near who could not take any pleasure in the warm sunshine, nor in all the gladsome things for which he was giving thanks, for the robin, after a twitter or two, and an inquiring turn of his neck and his bright eyes, flew down from the bough, and perched upon the wicker cage.

"Oh, dear, I wish we could hear what they are saying to each other!" sighed Daisy.

Presently the robin flew away, not far, however; they could see it hopping hither and thither about the grass and on the flower-beds, and soon it was by the cage again, not singing or even twittering now, for something was hanging from its bill.

"It is a worm for the thrush," whispered Ruth, squeezing her hands together in great excitement; she dare not clap for fear of frightening away the robin.

Clever little bird! between the wide wicker bars it had already dropped the worm down the thrush's throat.

Then it flew away to find another and yet another.

At last the thrush was satisfied; it even gave a feeble chirp and balanced itself on one leg by way of expressing its thanks, while the robin perched again on the bough as round to finish his song, now more joyous than before.

But would the dear little bird continue the task it had begun?

The children were very anxious about this.

When evening came they hid themselves behind the fir-tree, peeping round continually to watch the cage.

Yes, there was the red breast and the bright eyes, they could hear the little impatient chirp with which the robin summoned the slow awkward thrush to the cage, they could see how patiently it was feeding its helpless fledgling.

"Oh!" whispered Ruth, putting her lips close to her sister's ear, "I should like to give that dear robin a gold cage." But most likely the little brown bird was happier without it.

And now, every morning and evening, the same little scene went on.

Generally two little faces were pressed close against the lower panes of the nursery window, watching the pretty sight, and one morning there was something still more wonderful to be seen.

On this day the robin was a little later than usual.

And he was not alone; behind him flew two other birds, large ones, with brown backs and pretty speckled breasts, like that which was just beginning to appear in the caged thrush.

Daisy and Ruth whispered to each other that these must be the father and mother of their caged bird.

"Ruth," said Daisy, a day or two later, "I wonder whether the little thrush is old enough to fly yet."

It was evening, and each of the two children was tucked snugly in her little white bed.

Ruth's voice sounded rather sleepy as she answered—

"Suppose we open the cage door to-morrow and try."

"It would be nice to see it sit on a bough," said Daisy, "but I don't quite want to lose it."

"I think it would come to our window and sing," murmured Ruth, and then both children fell asleep.

Next morning as they hurried down into the garden, their heads brim full of their new plan, old Roger met them, with rather a disturbed look on his kindly face.

"I wouldn't go to the thrush this morning if I was you," he said.

"Why not, Roger? Oh, what has happened?"

"Well, Miss Daisy and Ruth, don't take it to heart, my deare, now don't ye, but the fact is, the poor thing was killed last night; something got at the cage, I fancy; anyhow there's the poor thing!"

"And we were just going to set it free," almost sobbed Daisy.

"I wouldn't grieve over it, if I was you," said the old gardener; "'twas too weak and delicate to have managed for itself—the other birds would have pecked and worried it most likely; it's best as it is, Miss Ruth," for the little girl was crying bitterly.

"The poor robin will be so sorry," she said.

Indeed, it seemed as if the robin knew somehow what had happened, for this little bird-member of the Humane Society was never afterwards seen fluttering about the empty cage, or hopping hither and thither on the grass under the fir-tree.

But Daisy and Ruth both declared that it often sat upon the bough, just above the grave of their dead favorite, and sang there its sweetest song.

TO HIS HEART.

BY E. LINWOOD SMITH.

ALL her life Margaret Hunter had lived alone with her grandfather in a house, in the midst of a garden which hid it from the road.

They had a few visitors.

Old Mr. Morley would have nothing to do with neighbors, and those who came to the house were principally old friends from a distance; old men and women who did not interest young Margaret much.

All she knew of her parents was that they must be dead.

Once she had asked her grandfather if he had any portrait of her mother, and he had said—

"Look in the glass and you will see her."

Then she had said—

"Grandpa, I never knew how my mother died," and he had turned away.

"It is something I cannot talk about," he said. "Ask no more questions, child. The dead are dead. Our hopes and love are with them. Let them rest."

Once too, she had spoken of her father.

It was to the old servant, who turned a frightened look over her shoulder, and said—

"Hush! Master won't like to have him talked of."

"Why?" asked Margaret.

"They quarrelled," said the old woman. "There, there be quiet—don't speak of it to master."

"When we have quarrelled with people we're the dear," said Margaret to herself, "we feel remorse. Of course, that is why grandpa cannot bear to speak of my poor father."

And thinking of the cold, stern man, who had never once caressed her, it did not seem unlikely that he might have been unkind to her parents.

He was not unkind to her, it is true, but he had never been tender.

Jane was fond of her, but she was ignorant and superstitious; and perhaps the most congenial companion Margaret had ever had, was a very strange one.

A woman no longer young, evidently a hard working person, yet as evidently by birth a lady, who had met her once in the woods when she was a little child, and had asked her for a kiss, and who ever since had, now and again, crossed her path in some lonely place, and talked to her as no one else ever did.

She asked her name once, and the woman had said.

"Call me Martha."

"Martha was my mother's name," said the child; "she died before I ever knew her."

Then suddenly she was very strangely moved.

"Oh, if I only had a dear mother," she said.

And the woman kissed her again, and tears dropped from her eyes.

That was years ago.

Margaret was now seventeen, yet still she met the pale, fair woman, with her hard-worked hands and high-bred face, her common dress and lady-like movements, in the woods by the little spring, amidst the grey rocks in the pathway that led from the orchard to the highway, and once or twice in the orchard itself.

That was when her grandfather was away.

And she had never spoken to him of this lady.

He never allowed her to have any friends.

Once she complained to the woman of this, but she only answered—

"Your grandfather is wise; obey him. Your quiet life is a safe one, at least. You do not know the world's dangers, my dear child."

Of late, however, Margaret had had a little secret of her own, one that did not tell her friend any more than her grandfather.

Someone else had met her in the lonely woods.

Someone else had told her, as this woman had said, that she was beautiful.

Yes, someone else had kissed her also, with a kiss that thrilled her through and through.

She had a lover of whom she knew nothing save that he was handsome, that he praised her, that he said life was unbleat without her.

Perhaps she might have told Martha all, but she feared she might make the meetings known to her friends, and Margaret knew, by instinct that the mention of a lover would horrify them all.

Yet she could not forego the one happiness of life.

She knew her grandfather would put an end to the pleasant meetings if he guessed at them; and Ralph Harland had also told her so.

"A strange old gentleman your grandfather," he had said; "a man who, though doubtless deserving of respect, has no sympathy for others. Were I to go to the house and ask permission to visit you, though he knows me well enough by reputation, he would drive me from his door. We must marry first, Margaret, and then ask his forgiveness. We can do without it if he refuses it, I think."

And Margaret felt that so she had with her Ralph for her very own she could do without all else.

What had her grandfather ever been to her?

She loved her friend Martha much better.

"Have you ever loved anyone?" she asked that poor woman at this time.

And a red flush rose to the pale cheek.

"The woman who has never loved is yet unborn," she said.

"And was not that love the greatest joy of your life?" asked Margaret. "Even though it is past—as I suppose it is, for you seem very lonely—does it not give you happiness to remember it?"

The woman clutched her by the arm.

"Margaret," she said, "love is woman's life; it is sometimes her eternal curse. Mine cursed me. Happiness! Ah, good Heaven! could you see my bleeding heart. Child, child, beware of love! Shun it, flee from it."

And Margaret put aside the fancy she had had of confiding in Martha.

"They are all alike," she said—"all alike. No one ever loved as Ralph and I love. They cannot understand us."

That day she kissed Martha fondly when she left her.

She had promised her lover to leave home with him that night, and she knew that they might never meet again.

She looked back after she had gone a little way.

Martha stood looking after her, shading her eyes with her hand.

All that evening Margaret wandered to and fro like an uneasy spirit, taking a silent adieu of her old home.

She felt some remorse when she looked at her grandfather, and she even felt sorry that she was about leaving Jane thus.

But Ralph stood firm.

She had no thought of drawing back.

She sat in the old kitchen at last lingering over the spot where she had been happiest, for, if there had been any comfort, it had been at Jane's knee, when the door burst open, and Jane herself tottered in, and trembling with horror, cast herself upon her knees.

"Oh, child, child, I never shall get over this night," she said. "Oh, God have mercy on me! What has poor Jane done to deserve this?"

"What has happened, Jane?" cried Margaret, kneeling beside the frightened woman. "Tell me. Speak to me."

"I've seen a spirit, Miss Maggie," said Jane. "A spirit from the other world. I have seen your mother, child, white and worn, and wretched, standing watching your window. Some trouble is coming, some trouble is coming. What shall I do?"

The girl grew pale.

"Jane, you must deceive yourself," she said.

"No, I don't, miss," said Jane. "I saw her plain as I do you.

"I couldn't forget poor Miss Martha. She was standing in the white moonlight, looking at your window.

"I daresn't tell master; but there's great trouble coming; death perhaps."

Margaret, with a horror for which she had no words, crouched close to the woman's side.

"Why should my mother come back to the world to-night?" she asked herself. "Am I doing wrong?

"Can it be wrong to leave home so? So wrong that my mother's spirit must return to guard me."

For the moment her resolution faltered.

But the terror passed ere long.

She even grew to believe that Jane was the victim of her superstitious terrors.

And she went to her room at last, resolved to meet her lover as she had promised.

She had prepared her little bundle, and placed the tiny sum of money she possessed in the pocket of her dress.

She had written a note to her grandfather and laid it on her unrumpled pillow.

And now that the house was all still—even Jane, in spite of her terror, asleep in her garret room—the girl crept downstairs and out into the orchard.

The moon shone bright; the path to the road was clear.

She crept down it and opened the gate.

A little way beyond a dark figure stood amongst the trees.

It hastened forward.

"My darling," cried a soft voice.

It was Ralph; all Margaret's terror vanished.

She was with her lover; she was safe.

"A carriage stands at the end of the lane," he whispered.

"We will be beyond pursuit in an hour. Come, my darling."

But as she placed her hand in his hand raised her lips to his own, another figure, crouched until now in the shadow under the great pear tree beside the gate, arose and glided like a ghost between them.

A white face turned itself towards Ralph Harland, a white hand waved him backward.

"Demon!" said a low, clear voice. "Black-hearted demon, leave this poor girl and go!"

"Who are you, who interfere?" said Ralph.

"Her mother," said the woman.

Margaret screamed.

In the white moonlight, her head uncovered, her face pale as that of the dead, the face seemed that of a spirit.

She did not recognize Martha, and overcome by terror, fainted in her arms.

And Martha, clasping the girl to her heart, repeated the command—

"Go! go! go!"

When Margaret again opened her eyes, she was alone with the woman.

She knew her face and voice now, and angrily shrank from her.

"Where is Ralph?" she said. "How dared you interfere?

"How dared you pretend to be my mother? Oh, Ralph, Ralph."

But the woman, tenderly bending over her, answered—

"Ralph, as you call him, has gone, forever, I hope.

"If he has gone to his wife, he has done well, for he has one.

"And I interfered to save you from destruction and disgrace, and, child, I did not utter a falsehood.

"I am your mother. Years ago, I left my father's home at night, with one as bad as Ralph.

"We were married, and six months afterwards I learned that he had another wife, and he finally fled to escape a prison. I only returned to place you, my child, upon the step of the old homestead. On your little forehead I have kissed [illegible].

"Father, this child is Martha's child. She is named Margaret after that blessed woman, Martha is in Heaven, and your wife. May she be more grateful for your kindness, more dutiful, more loving in every way, than her wretched mother!

"After that I worked honestly for my bread, in a humble station, but I could not refrain from seeing my child. O God, I have seen the new hope that had sprung up in her heart, and I, out of my bitter experience grew fear that all was not well. I have saved you, darling. That man has a wife already. Understand what I have saved you from."

And Margaret sobbed upon her breast.

"You must not leave me, mother," she said.

And the woman answered—

"I will go to my father and say—'Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee.'"

In the dawn two women knelt before the old man, and he was not stern to them nor cruel; his lips pressed Margaret's forehead, but he took Martha to his heart.

THE great man is he who does not lose his child's heart.

THE ROSE.

BY R. B. CHILTON.

I pluck for you, still wet with dew,
Fresh flowers of every shape and hue;
Which 'neath the skies of your blue eyes,
Shall fairer seem than where they grew.

This bursting rose the passion shows,
Which my poor heart would fain disclose;
Oh! let it rest upon your breast,
And breathe the secret that it knows.

THE NEW ASSISTANT.

"I'VE done what I never did before, Mrs. Sour," said Madame Plimsdale to her old housekeeper. "I've engaged a girl without a recommendation. You know Mademoiselle is gone, and we want someone to try on in the show-room; and this girl had such pretty shoulders! She put on that Turkish mantle, with the shaded fringe, in a way that would have made any lady that had money enough buy it without needing it. She says her name is Lilly Lintorne."

"Well, I hope she won't turn out like Sararan, who stole everything she could lay her hands on," said Mrs. Sour, snappishly.

On the third night of Lilly's engagement, as she was putting on her ulster to go home, Mrs. Sour said:

"Miss Lintorne, it strikes me as rather singular that you should think you would get off without being found out. You've got your pockets stuffed full of provisions. I watched you when you went back to the lunch-room and helped yourself. I shall mention it to Madame."

The girl burst into tears.

She looked so terrified and abashed, that Mrs. Sour felt an emotion of pity for her, and muttered:

"I don't mean to be hard, but it's my duty. Madame Plimsdale is always being robbed. It's a dishonest world."

Meanwhile, the girl took from the pocket of her ulster a bottle and a couple of paper packets. In one was two biscuits; in the other a little slice of cold ham.

"You will expose me!" she sobbed; "you will make me lose my place. Oh, what it is to be poor! I never knew—I never guessed what it would be! Everything—everybody against one! But was it really stealing? See! in this bottle is only the cup of tea you poured out for me. Here are the biscuits and ham I had on my plate. It is the half of my own lunch. I came back and took it like a thief; but do you think I am one?"

She burst into tears again, and sobbed, with her head upon the table—such a young, pretty, childish head, that the housekeeper softened.

"Well, no," she faltered; "I've been hasty for once. But Sararan turned me against human nature, that's a fact. But, my child, why couldn't you eat your lunch at table?"

"I took these things for my mother," sighed the girl. "I have not a penny to buy food with. I have fed her this way for three days. She would have starved if I hadn't."

"Don't, child, don't," said Mrs. Sour, who was by this time wiping her own eyes. "How was I to know? You ought to have come and told me. I'll see your ma this week."

She coaxed the girl to calmness, and sent her home with a basket of nice things for her sick mother; and from that day the two were friends.

Any one who was in the good graces of Mrs. Sour was well thought of by Madame. Besides, the girl was very clever. She learned the business rapidly, and soon earned a good salary.

It was the busy time before Christmas. All the workwomen at Madame Plimsdale's establishment were very busy.

On one particular night a request was made that everyone would stay until four o'clock.

Needles flew fast; and the work was finished and boxed up. Madame toiled with the rest.

Midnight passed; the small hours came. It was very hard for some of the girls to keep awake. Now and then the work rested in the lap, or the needle dropped from the unnerved finger.

Suddenly there came a cry of "Fire, fire!" at the door below.

Work dropped to the floor. The blinds were pulled up. The windows of the opposite houses reflected a red glare.

Madame Plimsdale's establishment was on fire. The girls rushed headlong streetward, casting their work to the winds. Madame secured the contents of her desk, and followed.

The employees were crowded in the street, looking upward; the neighbors had rushed out; the firemen got to work.

The roof seemed to be on fire. From the upper floor the servants made their escape, wrapped in blankets, quilts, or sheets; they wrung their hands, and lamented the trunks that held their few possessions, forgetting that their lives had been saved.

The mistress counted them one by one—"Maggie, Anna, Nellie! Are you all here?" Then she screamed aloud: "Mrs. Sour—poor old Mrs. Sour—she is up there yet!"

As she spoke, a slight form darted from the ranks of the workwomen, and flew into the burning house.

It was that of Lilly Lintorne.

Amidst the screams of her companions, she made her way up the long staircase, fitfully lighted by the flames that consumed the roof and walls of the upper floor.

The smoke was thick and black; the air hot; but the girl had tremendous courage and good lungs.

Happily, Mrs. Sour had not locked her door. She had forgotten to do this, having retired quite heavy with sleep.

How Lilly dragged her to the door and managed at the same time to clutch the precious bag containing the old lady's life-earnings, she never knew.

But as the flames caught the bed and rushed over the floor, she pushed and pulled the old woman into fresher air, which revived her sufficiently to give her power to help herself.

However, she had not left the fated room one moment too soon. Ere she reached the street, its interior was a fiery furnace.

"She's saved my life, and also my savings," said Mrs. Sour, in telling the story, afterwards. "I'd have been burnt in my bed if it had not been for her. I've made my will and left her everything I had. Human natur's not so bad, after all."

J. J. E.

Grains of Gold.

Affected simplicity is refined imposture.

Most of our comforts grow up between crosses.

One of the sublimest things in the world is plain truth.

Innocence is like polished armor; it adorns and it defends.

Nothing is ever done beautifully which is done in rivalship.

The progress of rivers to the ocean is not so rapid as that of man to error.

Nothing is so credulous as vanity, or so ignorant as of what becomes itself.

That action is best that procures the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers.

Where a cause is good, an appeal should be directed to the heart rather than the head.

The whole duty of a man is embraced in the two principles of abstinence and patience.

A certain amount of distrust is wholesome, but not so much of others as of ourselves.

One of the greatest blessings you can enjoy is a tender, honest, and enlightened conscience.

False fears bring on true vexations; the imaginary grievances of our lives are more than the real.

Our grand business is, not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.

The art of living easily as to money, is to pitch your scale of living one degree below your means.

Happiness consists not in having such and such possessions, but in being fitted to enjoy what we have.

There are men who love only themselves; and these are men of hatred, for to love one's self alone is to hate others.

The way to grow strong in Christ, is to become weak in yourself. God poureth no power into man's heart, till man's power is poured out.

Affectation is certain deformity; by forming themselves on fantastic models, the young begin with being ridiculous, and very often end in being vicious.

Our happiness depends less upon the art of pleasing than upon a uniform disposition to please. The difference is that which exists between ceremony and sincerity.

Christian content opens all lawful avenues of enterprise, bids us use all our faculties and make the most of them, and when we have done our best, gradually accept the results God sends.

Whatever busies the mind without corrupting it, has at least this use: That it rescues the day from idleness; and he that is never idle will seldom be vicious—indeed, if wisely busy, he cannot be so.

Femininities.

All women wish to be esteemed. They care less to be respected.

Women, more than all, are the element and kingdom of illusion.

A woman seldom writes her will. There is so much of it she can't.

But for women, our entire world were but a frost-bitten potato, worthless to the core.

Never attempt to convince a woman of anything by argument. You must resort to emotion.

The calculation of probabilities is never more idle than when applied to the thoughts and sentiments of a woman.

Large license is accorded to beauty. Every woman can afford to be saucy if she pleases, but not if she displeases.

The spinsters of Atlanta, Ga., have requested the Legislature to make it a special offence for any widow to marry again.

Female suffrage is a failure in Vermont. Of 314 women who had a right to vote at a recent election in Burlington, only eight exercised the privilege.

Mr. Beecher, too, says discouraging things about girl babies. Perhaps Mr. Beecher can tell us how leap year could be carried on if there were no girl babies.

In Salt Lake City the sidewalks are twenty feet wide. This is to permit a man's widows to walk abreast, instead of in couples, when going to his funeral.

While an American girl looks with favor on a duke or a count, the English girl snatches up an American plumber, and has the best of the swap every time.

"Civilization, on her luminous wings, soars in the direction of Reno, Nev.," says a California paper. The squaws in that vicinity have taken to using face-powder.

The paper pail, the invention of a Chicago lady, yields a large income. The gimlet-pointed screw, the idea of a little girl, has realized millions of dollars to its patentee.

An Indian named "Man-Afraid-of-Nothing," married a white woman in Montana, recently, and one week after his wedding applied to his tribe to have his name changed.

When a Dutch maid-servant wishes to go to a dance, and has no swain of her own, she hires a cavalier for the occasion. A beau with an umbrella receives double pay.

A surgeon, whose wife is a great scold, being asked what he thought would be the greatest triumph of his surgical art, replied, "To take the jaw out of a scolding woman."

Feminine news-gatherers are not a success. One tried it in a country town, and the people stopped taking the paper because she told them all the news before it came out.

It isn't often that two full yards of royalty get together, but it is the case with the Princess of Denmark, who is 6 feet 3 inches tall. She is the "highest" princess in the world.

A lady, being about to marry a man who was very low in stature, was told that he was a very bad man. "Well," said she, "if he is bad, there's one comfort—there is very little of him."

An old lady, looking at her glass, and finding that it too faithfully reflected her gray hair and wrinkled face, was heard to remark: "They do not make mirrors so well as they used to do."

Exactness may sometimes be carried to excess. We fancy it was so in a recent case, where a disconsolate widower wrote to announce the death of his wife, thus: "Her wearied spirit sank to rest at 3.35—railroad time."

Papa: "According to this new standard, Minnie, we must set the clock back four minutes, eh?" Minnie (still in the market): "Four minutes! Put it back lots, Papa! Nothing less than ten years will do me any good."

A young woman in Oshkosh, who married a man while under the impression that he was an "architect's assistant," became disconsolate upon discovering that he assisted the architect by carrying bricks up a ladder to a hod.

"What you need, madam," wisely remarked the doctor, as he glanced at her tongue, "is exercise." "I know it, doctor; but my husband is away so much, that I don't get a chance to talk to him half as much as he deserves."

In Japan women make their age known by certain styles of wearing the hair. In this country they don't. When an American woman wears her hair over the back of a chair at night, the style doesn't indicate whether she is 20 or 30 years old—but the probabilities are that she is.

A Cleveland woman tried holding a baby as collateral security for a board bill. She took care of the child, so that it's mother could work in a store. When the mother failed to pay the bill, the lady refused to give it up, and the owner of the property had to seek courts of law and get a writ of habeas corpus.

Most women are natural economists. They have twice the skill of saving that men have. Think of the "mild clothes made to look amist as well as new!" think of the old bonnets brought out and retrimmed in the latest style. Before men talk of the extravagance of women, they should endeavor to learn a lesson from their economy.

A farmer in Yates county, New York, a few days since, lost the early partner of his joys and sorrows. He buried her in a private cemetery, and erected a marble slab to her memory. In a short time he married a second wife. He then ploughed up his first wife's grave, and now uses the tombstone for a stepping-block in front of the house.

A little boy called at the Sacramento, Cal., police station, and asked the keeper to permit him to pass the night with his mother, who had been jailed for drunkenness. The woman was once beautiful and highly respected. The child, who had procured a small package of delicacies for his mother, was admitted to her cell, and locked up for the night.

News Notes.

General Sheridan was an altar boy in his youth.

A Baltimore swell went to a fancy dress ball as a donkey.

The winter in Great Britain has been unusually mild thus far.

Barnum has decided to name his white elephant Tom Thumb.

A white rainbow is one of the rare phenomena lately observed.

The plentiful snow, according to an old proverb, presages big crops.

Photographing on silk and linen is now successfully practiced in London.

Not one of the six Congressmen from California was born in that State.

In Michigan the Supreme Court has decided that pool-selling is gambling.

Smoking in the church vestibules is to be shut down upon in Barnesville, Ga.

It is said that for every novel printed and published in England, ten are written and rejected.

A man at South Boston, it is reported, takes a plunge in the salt water every morning in the year.

It is said that there are more people out of work in New York to-day than at any time for years past.

New York City has 2,000 rag-pickers, it is said, and their gatherings of rags are valued at $70,000 a year.

Chicago is to have a new opera house, nine stories high, with three fronts, and costing over half a million.

Statistics show that there are at present almost a million people in Great Britain who receive charitable relief.

The authorities of St. Giles, in Belgium, have supplied the police on night duty with cloth boots having rubber soles.

The Second Adventists definitely announce that the world will come to an end on the 4th of next November.

Matthew Arnold, the great English author and lecturer, thinks that in this country too many people flock to the cities.

A divorce was granted the other day by Chancellor Runyon, of New Jersey, to a couple that had been married for thirty years.

Bills amounting to $1,250,000 for damages done by the Union army in the civil war have been introduced into the present Congress.

A Newark street-car company's president is under bail for trial on the charge of keeping diseased horses in the company's stables.

A bill has been introduced at Albany, requiring the teaching of physiology and hygiene in the public schools of the State of New York.

A boy confined in the Sherman, Texas, calaboose had to be carried to a stove during the late cold spell to keep him from freezing to death.

A French authority says that boots and shoes may be rendered perfectly waterproof by soaking them for several hours in thick soap-water.

An English nobleman, now traveling in the West, is charged with falling in love with the housemaid of a Denver hotel and wanting to marry her.

A French industrial society has recommended the suppression of all circular saws on the ground that they are both wasteful and dangerous.

A Beaver, Pa., man has a grave dug and nicely walled for himself, and, aged eighty-five, has been waiting ever since 1876 for the summons to get into it.

Fred Curtis, of San Francisco, aged 17, has just created a sensation by marrying his aunt, a widow over forty years old, and the mother of two children.

The New York Tribune prints a communication in which it is asserted that the use of salt to melt the snow on car-tracks is not injurious to the feet of horses.

A beardless youth of 19 years is under arrest at Cadiz, Ky., on the charge of bigamy, and no less than four alleged wives have risen up to testify against him.

They say that Miss Ellen Terry went into a Chicago store the other day, looked over some photographs, and then picked up one of herself and asked the clerk who it was.

In an Erie, Pa., court the other day a man passed up to and asked the Court to confirm the bill of sale of which he had disposed of his child to one Peter Wilds, for the sum of $1.

New York's charity commissioners are endeavoring to perfect a plan by which the vagrants brought to the several prisons shall be required to saw the wood used in the various public schools and other institutions.

A Bowery, N. Y., dentist advertises his wares by having displayed in his window several wax figures whose mouths are opened and closed by machinery, displaying in rapid succession old and new sets of teeth.

A few weeks since a class of twenty-two students was examined before the general term at Syracuse, N. Y. Of the twenty-two, fifteen were unable to give the name of the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals.

Jennie Foskitt, of Wilbraham, Massachusetts, suddenly became blind some time since, and as suddenly recovered her eyesight a week later. She can remember nothing of what occurred during the interval.

A clothing firm in Providence, R. I., offered a span of horses to the customer who would guess nearest their weight. They weighed 3277 1-2 pounds; four guessers hit the exact figure, and will sell the span and divide the proceeds.

The Last Words.

BY JOHN S. M'COY.

MANY years ago, a girl and her old great-grandmother sat together—the girl in tears.

Said Great-grandmamma Hudson, sitting very straight—not lolling, at her seventy-eight years, as did her great-granddaughter of eighteen—

"Young folks think old folks are fools, but old folks know that young folks are."

"That's because you are old, grandma," sobbed Linda.

"No; it's because I was once young," said the old lady.

"But he's the only one I ever loved, or ever shall love," said Linda. "Papa is bad to me. Why should he think ill of Lewis? He doesn't know anything about him. I shall die if we are separated."

"I was going to die if we were separated," said great-grandmamma; "but I didn't."

"Oh, tell me, please," cried Linda. "Had you a lover? Did they separate you? Oh!"—she put her arms about her great-grandmother's knees—"oh, I never knew you had a love story—that is, that kind of one."

"Yes," said the old lady, "I had a lover; and I had a mother and father.

"You can have many lovers, but never more than one father and one mother.

"Folks think of that when it is too late.

"When father said that Cecil was Lord knows who, and he should not come to see me, I remember I almost hated him for it.

"When mother said she didn't like the young man, either, I almost hated her.

"Cruel creatures that stood between me and my young lover—that was what my dear parents seemed to me then; just what yours seem to you, I've no doubt.

"And I was worse than you, my dear, ever so much worse; for it seemed so wicked to me that anyone should take it for granted a man was not good, and worthy of love because he was a stranger, that I utterly refused all counsel, and made preparations to run away with Cecil and marry him at Gretna Green, a place in Scotland where runaway couples used to go at that time to be married by an old blacksmith.

"Everything was ready.

"I had my jewelry in my bosom, and my little bundle of clothing on my arm, and was creeping out of a little side-door of our house, that led into the garden, when a hand came down on my shoulder, and a voice cried out—

"'My girl, my girl, is this the way you use us?' and there was my father.

"Dear, dear, it's so many years ago—so many years ago—but I remember that moment so well.

"The long, dark hall, with its polished floor and low ceiling, and the tall clock standing in the corner at one end, ticking, ticking, ticking.

"Outside, the moon shining faint and white and the dark ivy growing over the stone wall, over which I meant to climb, and on the other side of which Cecil stood quietly waiting for me.

"My father's face was as white as that of a ghost in that light, and his hand shook as he held mine.

"'Oh, father, father,' I cried. 'If you'd only let me have my will in this one thing. You can't make a girl love or hate by saying so.'

"He stood, holding me firm and fast.

"'Do you think I want anything but your good?' said he. 'Would I not be glad to have you happy?

"'You little simpleton, do you know that if you had left my house this night, you would have gone to your ruin?'

"Outside was my lover and his knaves, inside my father, stern and hard, as it seemed to me.

"It seemed as though he led me back to prison when I had a chance of heaven before me, as he bolted the door.

"'It is Emeline who has betrayed me,' I said; and though they would never admit it, I knew my maid had proved false.

"Well, they locked me up in my room. How often I cried out—'I shall die if I am separated from Cecil.'

"I am very old, but when I think of it the old ache and pain come back again.

"My girl, he had eyes like black diamonds, and olive cheeks, and red, wet, pouting lips, and your men with padded shoulders, and thin arms and legs, and hollow chests wouldn't look like men standing beside him.

"Oh, he was a beauty, and, though you might not think it now, so was I.

"It was a dreary time, and my health broke down under it.

"I had a fever, and called for Cecil in my delirium, and when I was well, the doctor said I must have change of air, and mother decided to take me with her to the seaside; but first we were to go by the stage-coach to London, and visit an aunt I had there.

"It was the day of stage-coaches, and the day of highwaymen.

"Going over a certain common on our way, coaches had more than once been stopped; the men were armed always, and the women trembled when they saw horsemen riding towards them.

"'Your money or your life,' was their word and they kept it.

"'If we should meet the highwaymen,' said my mother; but I was not afraid. I did not care whom we met, or what happened to me.

"We rode away from home in the bright daylight, and we stopped for dinner and to change horses at an inn, and then we rode on again.

"It would be night long before we reached London.

"I sat in the coach with my head on my mother's shoulder, thinking of just one thing—Cecil and our parting.

"Should I never see him again, never, never?

"If he knew where I was, would he not follow me, and carry me off by force?

"Could I not somehow let him know, and escape from my aunt's house in London, and be married, so that no one could part us?

"Oh, I was so miserable—so miserable!

"Nothing like making plans that can come to nothing, and burst like bubbles when we have thought them out for wretchedness.

"The afternoon faded out, and the sun set, and I saw nothing of it. The moon arose.

"'See what a lovely moon,' said my mother.

"But I had not cared to look at the moon since I saw her over the garden wall that night, my love on one side and I on the other.

"Ah, me!

"Rumble went the coach, crack went the whip.

"Suddenly there was a tumult.

"'Gentlemen,' cried the guard, 'gentlemen, I'm afraid we are to have some trouble here. See to your weapons, gentlemen.'

"Then the coach came to a stand.

"The shrieking women clung together.

"Four masked men rode to the door.

"The coachman and guard lay in a ditch.

"One of the gentlemen was bound, the other was old and lame.

"They were rifling his pockets while he screamed.

"They took out a gold watch and a purse; his snuff-box, with diamonds on it.

"They had already the others money.

"Then one—the largest, the handsomest figure—bent over us.

"'Don't fear, ladies,' he said, in a soft voice. 'All we want is whatever valuables you may have about you.'

"Mamma began to scream.

"The lady who sat next to her fainted.

"We could not see the man's face, for he was masked, and we were in the shadow of the coach.

"'Something shines on your finger,' he said; 'let me see it.

"He caught at a chain on which I wore a locket with a curl of Cecil's hair.

"'Don't take that!' I cried. 'Don't take that!'

"I clutched it.

"Our heads were close together.

"I saw his chin and his mouth under his mask.

"At the same moment my face was thrust into the moonlight.

"'Amy!' I heard him whisper to himself and I knew Cecil.

"Meanwhile something had happened.

"Two gentlemen had ridden up.

"The one who had been bound was free.

"For once the tables had been turned upon the robbers.

"Then one had ridden away; two were bound, and one lay bleeding.

"This last was Cecil.

"I knew now that my father had not been wrong.

"Cecil was even worse than he thought him.

"He was a highwayman; a bad man, and the consort of bad men; a creature who cut purses on the public road.

"They were not all ignorant men, these highwaymen, by any means.

"Many had good birth, education, and manners.

"Yes, a bad man; but how could I hate him all at once?

"I understood that my father had been right in parting us; but those lips had kissed me; those hands held mine.

"'The ladies need fear no longer,' said one of the gentlemen. 'Those fellows are now in a condition to molest them.'

"Then he said: (men didn't say such high-flown things then)—

"'For I had torn my hand from my mother's and knelt beside Cecil.

"'Amy, you know what I am now, but I loved you.'

"And I answered—

"'Cecil, I may hate your deeds without hating you.'

"Those were the last words we ever spoke to each other—the very last."

The old woman looked into her eyes.

"He was a very bad man, my dear," she said. "Very bad, and I never saw him again.

"I believe he died a shameful death one day, at the hands of the executioner.

"But, you see, it was because I have been young, not because I am old, that I said you young folks were fools.

"It was a good while yes a good while after that night in the stage coach, before I came to my senses sufficiently to thank dear papa for his watchfulness over me, and be really glad that I had never been Cecil's wife.

"But I forgot my dear; I did at last; and I married my good husband, your great-grandfather, whom you never saw, and we were always happy.

"The heart of woman is a mystery, and has been since Eve, my little girl."

SOME tramps made free with an unoccupied house in Minnesota, slept in the comfortable beds, used the cooking utensils and the store, and for a week enjoyed life. Then they learned they were in a small-pox pest-house.

Humorous.

Name a bank that there is no discount on? A bank of earth.

A little batch of $40,000,000 is very naughty, but it's very nice.

A bad man shows his bringing up when he is brought up by a policeman.

Announcement of a dog's death by a marine reporter. Another bark lost.

The horse-shoe is only a symbol of good luck when it is on the winning horse.

A goat ought to be first-class material for oleomargarine. There is no better butter than the goat.

When you see a counterfeit coin on the sidewalk always pick it up. You are liable to arrest if you try to pass it.

Why is a woman deformed when she is mending her stockings? Because her hands are where her feet should be.

"But," said the serenaded man, "I must go out and make a speech. Something must be done to stop the playing of that band."

A poor, thoughtless old gentleman sat down the other day on the spur of the moment. His screams were frightful.

A duck before two ducks, a duck behind two ducks, and a duck between two ducks; how many were there in all? Three.

It is a remarkable fact, that however well young ladies may be versed in grammar, very few are enabled to decline matrimony.

The reason why some of the street lamps burn all night is because the light is so small it is afraid to go out alone in the dark.

Physicians have used Dr. Graves's Heart Regulator as a cure for Heart Disease. Price $1, by druggists.

What leads you to believe that flies are more subject to madness than any other insect or animal? Because they generally die cracked.

The difference between a "country" and a "city" greenhorn is, the one would like to know everything, and the other thinks he can tell him.

A French dramatist makes one of his characters in a recent play declare that he is "holding up up the trousers of despair with the braces of hope."

Consumption Cured.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. NOYES, 149 Power's Block, Rochester, N. Y.

Honey Bees.

We call the special attention of our readers to the advertisement of Mrs. Cotton, in this column, under head of "Honey Bees." Mrs. Cotton's new system of bee-keeping has proved a great success.

Superfluous Hair.

Madame Wambold's Specific permanently removes Superfluous Hair without injuring the skin. Send for circular. Madame WAMBOLD, 128 West Springfield Street, Boston, Mass.

☞ When our readers answer any Advertisement found in these columns they will confer a favor on the Publisher and the advertiser by naming the Saturday Evening Post.

NERVOUS DEBILITY

Vital Weakness and Prostration, from overwork or indiscretion, is radically and promptly cured by

HUMPHREYS' HOMEOPATHIC SPECIFIC No. 28.

Been in use 30 years, and is the most successful remedy known. Price $1 per vial, or 5 vials and large vial of powder for $5, sent post free on receipt of price.

Humphreys' Homeopathic Medicine Co.,
109 Fulton Street, New York

Brigg's Transfer Papers.

New Illustrated Catalogue, showing 400 designs for Braiding, Embroidery, and Art Needlework, sent on receipt of 25c. W. H. Quimby, 11 Euclid av., Cleveland, O

HONEY BEES.

THE NEW SYSTEM OF BEE-KEEPING.

Every one who has a Farm or Garden can keep Bees on my plan, with good profit. I have invented a Hive and new system of Bee-management, which completely changes the whole process of Bee-keeping, and renders the business pleasant and profitable. I have received One Hundred Dollars Profit, from the sale of Box Honey from One Hive of Bees in one year. Illustrated circular of Full Particulars Free. Address MRS. LIZZIE E. COTTON, West Gorham, Mass.

40 Sello Fish, Extra size, Golden Beauties, Friendship Socks, Scrips Motto & 1884 Cards, with name, 10c. 11 pks. & this fancy rolled gold seal ring for $1. Agt's complete Album 15c. Please remember this is not the cheap pack and ring so much advertised. ALLING BROS., Northford, Ct

CRAZY PATCHWORK Package of bright, elegant silks plain and brocades, 25c.; large samples 10c. Embroidery Floss 1-2 oz. ass'd colors 20c. 6 pks $1. Fowler & Co, New Haven, Ct.

50 Double Enamel Chromo Cards. Embellished in many beautiful colors, with name 10c. Sample book, 25c. Steam Card Works, West Haven, Conn.

OPIUM Morphine Habit Cured in 10 to 20 days. No pay till Cured. DR. J. STEPHENS, Lebanon, Ohio.

40 (1884) Chromo Cards, no 2 alike, with name 10c. 13 pks. $1. GEO. I. REED & CO., Nassau, N.Y.

25 Rich Transparent Cards, name on, 5 Lady beauties all 10c. 2 lots 50c. Lock Box B, Higganum, Ct.

25 Fine White Gold Edge Cards with name, 10c. 10 packs & premium $1. Shaw & Co., New York, N.Y.

DR. RADWAY'S SARSAPARILLIAN RESOLVENT.

The Great Blood Purifier.

FOR THE CURE OF CHRONIC DISEASE.

SCROFULOUS OR SYPHILITIC, HEREDITARY OR CONTAGIOUS.

Chronic Rheumatism, Scrofula, Glandular Swelling, Hacking Dry Cough, Cancerous Affections, Syphilitic Complaints, Bleeding of the Lungs, Dyspepsia, Water Brash, White Swelling, Tumors, Hip Diseases, Mercurial Diseases, Female Complaints, Gout Dropsy, Bronchitis, Consumption.

For the cure of

SKIN DISEASES,

ERUPTIONS ON THE FACE AND BODY, PIMPLES, BLOTCHES, SALT RHEUM, OLD SORES, ULCERS, **Dr. Radway's Sarsaparillian Resolvent** excels all remedial agents. It purifies the blood, restoring health and vigor; clear skin and beautiful complexion secured to all.

Liver Complaints, Etc.,

Not only does the Sarsaparillian Resolvent excel all remedial agents in the cure of Chronic Scrofulous, Constitutional and Skin Diseases, but it is the only positive cure for

Kidney and Bladder Complaints

Urinary and Womb Diseases, Gravel, Diabetes, Dropsy, Stoppage of Water, Incontinence of Urine, Bright's Disease, Albuminuria, and in all cases where there are brick-dust deposits, or the water is thick, cloudy or mixed with substances like the white of an egg, or threads like white silk, or there is a morbid, dark, bilious appearance and white bone-dust deposits, and where there is a pricking, burning sensation when passing water, and pain in the small of the back and along the loins.

SOLD BY DRUGGISTS.

One bottle contains more of the active principles of medicine than any other preparation. Taken in Teaspoonful Doses, while others require five or six times as much. **One Dollar Per Bottle.**

R. R. R.

RADWAY'S READY RELIEF.

The Cheapest and Best Medicine for Family Use in the World.

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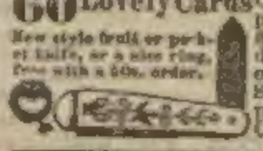

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WHAT THEY CAUGHT.

Poor marrying maidens summering west,
Each cast her little net;
Returning, they relate to "Ma"
What fortune each had met.

"O Ma!" said intellectual Jane,
"I caught a college man;
No money—but the stock of brains
Would lead a caravan."

"O Ma!" remarked young Sophy Ann,
"I caught a splendid dude;
No brains—but lots of cash,
And bluest sort of blood."

"O Ma!" said delicate Louise,
"I gained some strength and health;
I also caught a journalist,
Whose brains will give him wealth."

"No time to fish had I," said Nan,
(Some thirty-four years old),
"Yet, staying out to watch these girls,
I caught—a dreadful cold."

—B. BUDGET.

Facetiæ.

The "last" fraud—A cheap boot.

Can the sun's character be considered spotless?

What is a Western settler? The contents of a six-shooter.

"I declare you beat me," exclaimed the drum to the stick.

A charity bawl: "Gimme ten cents ter buy loaf er bread with."

What word can be pronounced quicker by adding a syllable to it? Quick.

What part of a lady's walking apparel resembles a colored dandy? A sable muff.

Sugar went up so high lately that it caused a slight increase in the price of sand.

What strange metamorphosis do people undertake every night? To turn into a bed.

"Come wheel, come woe!" as the man said when the cart was going to run over him.

Why is a drawn tooth like a thing no longer encumbered? Because it is out of the head.

"Wonderful!" said a clergyman of Dr. Graves' Heart Regulator; "it cured my Heart Disease." Price, $1.

Emperor Francis Joseph gives it out that he despises cards, and don't know an ace from a jack. Maybe he can catch greenhorns over there, but that trick is old in America.

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50 SATIN CHROMO CARDS, Beauties, name on 10c. Autograph Album in gilt and colors, 10c, or both, 15c. Agents make money! Full outfit and samples, 25 cents. CLINTON & CO. North Haven, Conn.

40 Lovely Chromo Cards, name in script, 10c; 11 pks with elegant Hand Ring $1. Agt's Book and 11'd Premium List 25c. Franklin Print'g Co, N'th Haven, Ct

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music and words, to any address. Among them we may mention the following:

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A Violet from Mother's Grave.
Tripping o'er the hills.
Rich and Rare were the Gems She Wore.
I'm Getting a Big Boy Now.
Katey's Letter.
O Fred, tell them to Stop!
One Bumper at Parting.
Little Golden Sunbeam.
Kathleen Mavourneen.
Twickenham Ferry.
The Blue Alsatian Mountains.
Killarney.
All on account of Eliza.
The Torpedo and the Whale!
The Man with the Seulskin Pants.
The Old Folks are gone.
Is Jennie True To Me?
Oh, Lucinda.
Put Away That Straw.
With the Angels By and Bye
Scenes of Childhood.
Grandmother's Chair.
Oh, Mary Ann, I'll Tell Your Ma!
My Heart's with my Norah.
Lardy Dah!
The Colored Hop.
Don't Shut out the Sunlight Mother.
The Sweet Flowers I've Brought to You.
Meet me To-night.
Angel Faces o'er the River.
Yes, I'll Love You When You're Old.
Tell de Children Good-bye.
Hardly Ever.

Etc., Etc., Etc.

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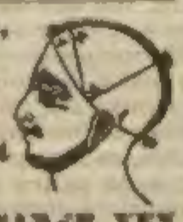

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FOR WIGS, INCHES.	TOUPEES AND SCALPS, INCHES.
No. 1. The round of the head.	No. 1. From forehead back as far as bald.
No. 2. From forehead over the head to neck.	No. 2. Over forehead as far as required.
No. 3. From ear to ear over the top.	No. 3. Over the crown of the head.
No. 4. From ear to ear round the forehead.	

He has always ready for sale a splendid Stock of Gents' Wigs, Toupees, Ladies' Wigs, Half Wigs, Frizettes, Braids, Curls, etc., beautifully manufactured, and as cheap as any establishment in the Union. Letters from any part of the world will receive attention.

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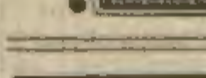

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50 Elegant Imp. Chromo Cards, name in new script type only 10c. 13 pks $1, or 10 pks for $1 and choice free of handsome gold ring, plain, chased, fancy, stone setting, or tortoise 2-blade knife. Snow & Co, Meriden Ct

Try The best cards for the money: 50 for 10c. Premium with 3 packs. E. H. Pardee, New Haven, Ct

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'Singer' Model Sewing Machine only $15

A Cutter, Shuffler, Tucker, Five Rufflers, Binder, Thread Cutter, Needles, Oil and full outfit with each. Guaranteed to be perfect. Warranted 5 years. Don't pay double for machines no better, when you can try these before you pay a cent. All late improvements. Runs light with little noise. Handsome and durable. Circulars with hundreds of testimonials free. GEO. PAYNE & CO, 47 Third Ave., Chicago, Ill.

THIS SOLID GOLD BAND RING, warranted Solid Gold or money refunded, in an elegant velvet-lined casket, sent free by return mail. Beautiful Cards, and our new illustrated Premium List. Agents' terms, &c., all sent post-paid for 25c. 3 for $1, 25. Other goods to secure new agents for 10c. We will print your name in new type on 50 Beauties, 50 all new Chromos, 10c, 11 packs for $1, and the above ring FREE to sender of clubs. New Sample Book 25c, post-paid. CAPITOL CARD CO., HARTFORD, CONN.

50 Beautiful Imported Chromo Cards with name in fancy type, 10c. This pack includes all the latest, best and most popular styles ever issued. 11 packs and this beautiful Steel Ring for $1. Get up or your friends to send with you and thus get your own pack and an Elegant Ring Free. Sample Album. ROYAL CARD CO., NORTHFORD, CONN.

CRAZY PATCHWORK Send to the TALE SILK WORKS

New Haven, Ct (*The originators of the Silk Patchwork craze*) for a dollar package of beautiful Silks for Patchwork, 8 packages for 5 Embroidery Silk, assorted colors 20c. a package, 6 packages $1

50 SATIN FINISH CHROMOS with name 10c. Send us 15 names with $1.50 and you will receive a Beautiful Panama Diamond Ring FREE. STAR CARD CO., Clintonville, Ct.

Ladies' Department.

FASHION CHAT.

So many inquiries are made as to suggestions for novel fancy dresses that I venture to describe a few, which, though distinctly suitable for the purpose described, can, by the exercise of a little ingenuity in alteration, do duty afterwards as simple ball dresses.

It is somewhat absurd to decorate an ordinary black evening toilette with a bunch of scarlet flowers, and to put in appearance at a fancy ball as Poppies, or as forget-me-not, with the addition of a few sprays of those pretty but simple flowers to an every-day ball gown.

The following costumes, if carried out and well executed by experienced hands, invariably make effective points of color amid the motley assemblage of "all nations."

The Folly dress has been worn many times; but a certain originality is claimed for it, as described in the arrangement and selection of the colors used.

The Time of Roses and Maid of Kent are especially pretty dresses for young fair faces, while Oranges, Flame, and Rouge et Noir are suitable to a dark type of beauty.

The Time of Roses.—A short skirt of white satin with a plaited flounce at the edge, above which is placed a fringe of rose buds of all colors on flexible stalks of various lengths; folds of white tulle almost entirely cover the skirt, the tulle thickly showered with rose leaves of all shades.

The petals should be fastened to the tulle with strong gum before it is draped on the skirt, thus giving a more airy effect; the tulle is caught and fastened up at one side with a large bouquet of different colored roses and leaves, with one or two butterflies mounted on shaking wires, hovering over the flowers.

Low bodice of moss-green satin or plush, the basque cut in long scallops edged with lace, in each scallop a different colored rose with leaves and hanging buds; a large spray of roses on one shoulder, with butterflies.

Hair arranged in small curls over the head, a round wreath of colored roses and a diamond butterfly on springs placed towards the front a little on one side; no other jewelry.

A necklet of rosebuds, green satin shoes, fan composed of a full blown pink rose with butterflies.

This is a very pretty dress for a young fair girl.

Fire or Flame.—A short skirt of a vivid flame-colored satin, edged with a thick ruche lined with shot red and gold tissue.

Above this on the lower part of the skirt is arranged a drapery of smoke-colored tulle thickly sewn with red and gold spangles, and edged with large Spanish balls of gold tinsel; over this and just below the basque of the bodice is placed a scarf of flame-colored satin, lined with gold and red tissue, edged with Spanish balls, the ends tied and falling at the side or back.

A pointed bodice of tissue, with hanging sleeves from the shoulders cut in long sharp points, each finished with a tinsel ball, and the sleeves lined with flame-colored satin.

A Medici collar cut in points also lined with satin.

The hanging sleeves, which must be very long, may be caught together and fastened at the back, just below the waist, if desired.

A small cap headdress of smoke-colored tulle, thickly spangled with red gold, and a flame-colored aigrette.

A gold serpent necklet and bracelets and black gloves and hose, with satin boots of flame color, finished with gold tassels or tinsel balls.

A large black fan spangled to match the costume, with Fire or Flame either in red satin letters or painted upon it.

Folly ought to appear in a short skirt composed entirely of gold tissue, arranged from the waist downwards as a series of pointed flounces, each flounce lined throughout with alternate pale blue and pale pink satin, each point finished, as usual, with a gold bell.

These flounces are mounted on a black satin foundation, and the colored linings showing with every movement of the wearer, in combination with the gold tissue is very pretty and effective.

A black and gold brocaded bodice pointed back and front, and laced with gold cord; the basque is trimmed all round the edge with flat loops of pale blue and pink satin ribbon, each loop finished with a bell; the very short sleeves composed of ribbon loops and bells, and on each shoulder is placed a Punchinello head on a rosette of blue and pink.

Powdered hair, with a cluster of pink, blue, and black feathers, arranged en aigrette at the side, and fastened with a diamond clasp.

A necklet of gold bells on velvet. Black hose, with French boots, half blue half pink, finished with bells.

Black gloves to elbow, with bows and long ends of blue and pink ribbon. Punchinello with bells on gold stick to be carried in the hand.

The skirt of the following stylish toilette, worn at a very fashionable wedding consists of salmon velvet, covered with applications of moss green satin, two colors which combine beautifully together.

The skirt is deeply crenelated, to show an under-skirt of pleated green satin.

A small but very graceful satin drapery encircles the hips and forms a full puff and drapery behind, it is gathered on to the short pointed corsage of satin, which is open from neck to edge, with salmon velvet revers embroidered with satin applications, to show a full plastron of white lace, drawn into a blouse at the waist with ribbon, and then forming a graceful white drapery.

A Powder Puff is arranged as follows: Short petticoat of perpendicular folds of pale pink tulle, over satin, thickly pleated, simply cut in small points at the edge; an overskirt of many folds of white tulle mounted on stiff muslin foundation, and much bunched up all round.

The tulle is almost completely covered with tufts of swansdown sewn on very thickly.

This skirt is put on about seven inches from the waist, and covers the petticoat to a few inches below the knee, the upper part of the puff being formed of soft pale pink silk gathered in at the waist under a white satin band, finished with a rosette in front.

A full bodice of pale pink silk gathered at the waist, cut low round the neck, and edged with swansdown.

Short puffed sleeves of silk, and on each shoulder a regular "powder puff" of pink and white placed above long loops of white and pink ribbon.

Hair curled and powdered; patches on the face; black velvet round the throat; long white gloves; round fan of white marabout, with pink rose in the centre.

Rouge et Noir is a most effective dress when arranged, a complete parti-colored costume of scarlet and black; but care must be taken to select a bright shade of red, as being a better contrast with black than any shades of crimson. Skirts of tulle in perpendicular folds.

Festooned panlers of scarlet and black satin trimmed with three rows narrow gold braid, and edged with black and red lace thickly sewn with gold coins.

Pointed bodice half black half scarlet, laced with gold cord, and trimmed to match the skirt.

A flat girdle of cloth of gold, to which is fastened a pouch of the same material, is attached to the waist, and falls low on the skirt on the opposite side.

Shoulder straps of satin finished with festooned chains of gold coins falling over the arms.

Hair powdered with gold dust, and a small cap, half black half scarlet, arranged with two stiff quill feathers a la Mephisto, in front, and edged with gold coins. On one shoulder a large knot of stephanotis or other white flower in cluster of loops of red and black ribbons.

A gilded croupier's rake carried in the hand. Necklet and bracelets of single diamonds.

Gloves, shoes, hose, one of each color; fan to match. If preferred, the petticoat may be satin, with odd numbers appliqué in scarlet, outlined with gold on the black half, and even numbers in black on the scarlet portion.

The effect of this dress, all red on one side, all black on the other, is exceedingly uncommon.

Fireside Chat.

TABLE DECORATIONS.

[CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.]

On the largest middle one would stand a tall glass of flowers, on the two smaller the glasses should be lower, or small china vases may take their place, filled with tiny growing ferns.

Shells filled with flowers, are sometimes used now as table ornaments; and skilful fingers, guided by fertile brains in conjunction with artistic taste, will prove that there is a large field open here for the display of talent.

Success will depend on the choice of shells, and still more upon the manner in which they are arranged and filled.

Discretion should be exercised as to the number the table will take, so that there should not be an over-plus; then there should be variety without the loss of unity.

We do not need to match our shells in pairs as we would our vases, still they must to some extent agree either in size or form: to have one very large specimen, and in the corresponding position on the table a wee insignificant one, would be fatal to all ideas of good proportion.

They may be placed au naturel on the cloth or plush, or they may be mounted on stands.

The latter are easy enough for any one to make, although there is, of course, some little trouble attending their manufacture; still there is a lasting satisfaction, if it is successfully accomplished, in seeing our own handiwork on our tables.

The stands are to be made in the following way:—Get some firm young branches of trees and cut off pieces of the required length; trim off the smaller shoots informally to within about a quarter of an inch or so of the stem.

Now ebonize all the sticks and set them on one side to dry.

Then with some wire, or twine, fasten them together, some little distance from the top, after the fashion of the gipsy kettle-stands.

The fastening must be placed higher or lower according to the size of the shell the stand is to support.

Cut the tips of the off-shoots and also the fastening.

Set the shell well into the sticks, and on no account let it look as if it would easily fall off, neither should it appear top-heavy.

Having now made our ornaments, we may enjoy the pleasure of seeing how they look when filled.

The larger kinds may be set with lycopodium drooping over the edges, and some tall feathery fern-leaves subduing a few blossoms of brilliant hues; the smaller ones can have a foundation of moss laid in, and shooting up from among the rich green some primroses and snowdrops.

Flowers must never be overcrowded. Those who can arrange a few effectively with some delicate fronds of maiden hair more certain of a successful result, and deserve higher praise, than others who must needs have a large handful at least to fill a single vase;

Colors, too, require to be contrasted well, the brilliantly-tinted flowers being modified in tone with ample greenery, the more more delicately toned with light graceful foliage.

If one color is found to detract from, or "kill," another, they must not be placed in juxtaposition.

When heavier and lighter kinds of flowers are combined, the latter must be cut with longer stems that they may rise above the rest and fall gracefully over them.

Much of interest might be written on the subject, but we must not linger further than to say that the best way to prove whether the arrangement is satisfactory or not is to finish it off, put it in position, and then to stand back some distance to look at it; the faults can then be noted, and the general effect judged of, as they never could be while the observer is bending over the vase putting in the flowers.

In the same way does the artist judge of his painting; he puts in some touches, then retires a few paces to criticise his work.

And the arrangement of flowers is artistic work; to a few it comes as it were naturally, the eye decides at once on combinations of color and form, and with a few skilful touches they rear a marvel of loveliness in make the commonest of vases.

Above all, never let an artificial flower, made of muslin or paper, find room on the table, as if any one could be imposed upon by such paltry make-believes, or that such materials, forsooth, could even for an instant lead any one to suppose that they were looking at the delicate petals of a natural flower.

If we cannot have cut flowers, and are not satisfied with growing foliage plants alone, thinking that color is indispensable to dinner-table decorations, then by all means let us find it, but in some less objectionable way.

Let us subdue our candle-light with soft pink shades, lay our table with ruby-tinted glass, let our water-jug and goblets be of topaz-hued glass set with amethyst handles let us ornament our dishes with clear-cut jellies of varied tints; there are a hundred ways in which we may add color without descending to the employment of shams.

And what of menu cards? Of the making of these it would seem there is no end.

Well, we will give our idea of a pretty conceit: if they are not chic they are nothing.

Have a miniature easel cut by a carpenter and also a palette. Stain them both dark oak.

Now paint a cluster of flowers on the left side of the palette, being sure to leave space enough clear for a card to be fixed on it; on the card the menu is to be written.

Choose one of the right size, make four holes a little way in, one at each of the corners, lay it in position on the palette, and make four corresponding holes in the latter right through the wood.

Now get some tiny gold-headed paper-fasteners, and with these fasten the card in place.

Glue the palette on to the easel, and the mean stand is complete.

Correspondence.

SALLIE.—Your criticism, as a whole, was excellent.

READER.—Statistics and experience seem to show that it is better in many ways for first cousins not to get married. In some countries there are laws against it.

P. S.—The poem is too long, and would not interest the majority of our readers. You can get it along with a great many other pleasant reading pieces, in almost any cheap book of recitations.

SUFFERER.—We are afraid not. Alcoholism, up to a certain point, is a disease of the stomach, while the opium habit affects the nerves and brain. Your best plan would be to apply to a good physician.

FIDELITY.—P. P. C. stands for *pour prendre congé*—to take leave; Cæsar's dying words, "*Et tu Brute*," are pronounced as spelled, except the final e, which is pronounced *Brut-e*. The meaning is: thou too, Brutus.

H. McB.—You meet a person for the first time and dislike him. This is called an "instinctive" dislike, not being the result of association or training. We think for ourselves that human beings are more or less endowed with instinct, as separate from reason.

IGNORANCE.—Bridal presents have the card of the donor, with compliments, or kind wishes expressed upon it, attached to the gift; and when sent in a package should be addressed to the bride in her maiden name, perhaps in care of her parents, but never to them.

VIRGINIA W.—The stage is quite as respectable as many other professions, and the great majority of its members are noted for their prudent conduct. Its only objection to most heads of families is, that for young girls it offers greater temptations to be led astray.

REDIE.—The difference is magnetic. Ladies kiss as a matter of form, and the kiss is forgotten as soon as given; but when a young lady receives a kiss from a gentleman, it produces sensations that are not soon banished from the mind, particularly when it is, as the novelists have it, "the first kiss of love."

P. B.—The temperature of the human body is about 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and remains about the same through winter and summer, in the tropics as well as in the frozen regions of the north. It may change temporarily within the range of 12 degrees, but any great or long-continued elevation or diminution of the bodily heat is certain to result disastrously.

A. J. G.—(1.) Gretna Green is a village between England and Scotland, which at one time was famous as a resort for those running away to be married. (2.) There is in England what is called the College of Heralds. For a certain sum they will provide almost anybody, English or American, with a coat-of-arms. (3.) Write to Washington, under the lawyer's name.

J. S.—Your acrostic is good, considering it is your first attempt. But the acrostic is a very difficult form of poetry, and, therefore, every allowance should be made you. The lines are somewhat uneven as to measure—a most important point. The ideas and words are commendable, and show that, with a little practice, you could produce something well worth printing.

PRUE.—A "German" is a group of figures arranged as one dance. It may be more or less long, complicated and difficult. A gentleman is always selected to lead in it, and it is always one who is experienced and who has had a good deal of practice in social affairs of this kind. "Favors," pretty fancy trifles, are provided by the hostess, and presented at the close of every special figure to the ladies by their partners.

SMOKER.—It would be difficult to determine "which is the milder, a cigar or a pipe of tobacco." Much must depend on the character of the tobacco. Speaking generally, cigars are easier to smoke than pipes. The smoke enters the mouth in less volume from a cigar than from a pipe. A foreign cigar of medium strength—which is better than a very mild one—is probably as delicious a form of tobacco as can be obtained.

L. A.—(1.) No. It is just as natural for her to show preference for him, as he for her. (2.) Under such circumstances young girls ought to give heed to the counsel of parents. If their objections are well founded, she should be guided by them. Where there is a doubt, however, she has a right to judge for herself. In your case, your people do not seem to have as much chance of being in the right as yourself.

J. B.—Either will do. You can write again whenever you please, but if you are so long making up your mind to accept a young man as a husband as you have been in summoning courage to write to us, you will stand a fair chance of being on the old maids' list; but, as somebody has said, young ladies will scream and run away at the sight of a little spider, but will very joyfully go to church with a man about a million times its weight.

JOE.—A suitable magnifying glass or a pair of spectacles may help the sight in either of two ways—by relieving muscles which, without it, would be kept in a state of tension, holding the eye steady, and to a certain extent compressed, or by so enlarging the image as to provide a more extensive impression on the retina. Whether it is expedient to have recourse to a glass in any particular case, must depend upon circumstances and conditions which no one but a skilled oculist can determine. An optician knows the instrument, but it requires an oculist to know the eye. Every oculist is, or ought to be, an optician; but no mere optician can practically act as an oculist—just as a surgical instrument-maker is unable to act as a surgeon, or a druggist as a prescriber of drugs.

M. L. B.—We do not think that there is any necessity for your giving way to despair because you have no lover at nineteen. There are numerous thousands of married women now, who, if they only had the past to retrace, would resolutely resist every temptation to marry before they were entirely out of their teens. Romance and love in a cottage are very captivating, but stern reality in the shape of a wife of twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, with four or five infants, and all the cares of domestic duties to attend to, has a depressing effect. It is the duty of every man and woman to marry, but such marriage should not take place until the husband is sufficiently settled in life to maintain his family, and the wife of an age at which the new duties will settle naturally on her.